



Hispania

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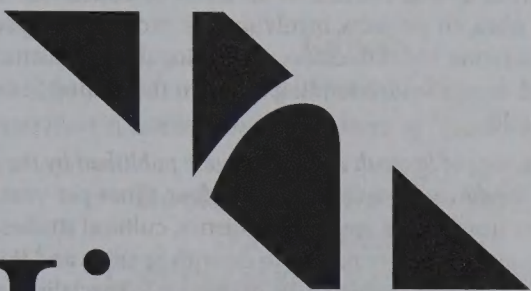
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Hispania

March 2016 Volume 99 Number 1

A journal devoted to the teaching
of Spanish and Portuguese

AATSP
The American Association of
Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese



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Hispania—A journal devoted to the teaching of Spanish and Portuguese published by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese is a refereed journal published four times per year. The journal invites the submission of original, unpublished manuscripts on applied linguistics, cultural studies, culture, film, language, linguistics, literary criticism, literature, and pedagogy having to do with Spanish and Portuguese. *Hispania* publishes scholarly articles and invited reviews that are judged to be of interest to specialists in the discipline(s) as well as to a diverse readership of teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. All articles and reviews should display thorough and comprehensive knowledge of the subject and field. Further considerations in the evaluation of manuscripts include their contribution to the advancement of knowledge, originality of method or focus, organization, and clarity of expression. Articles may refer to but not repeat previously published content. Articles/reviews may be in Spanish, Portuguese, or English; however, we encourage authors to submit in Spanish and Portuguese. The material published in *Hispania* reflects the opinions of the authors and are not necessarily those of the editors or the journal's sponsoring organization the AATSP.

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The American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) has an electronic manuscript submission and review system for *Hispania*. Submissions are only accepted through the ScholarOne Manuscripts system, which can be found at the following URL. Please bookmark it in your browser:

<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/hispan>

All articles and book/media reviews must be submitted electronically at the above URL. *Hispania*'s submission guidelines can also be accessed there by clicking on "Instructions & Forms" under "Resources" on the right-hand side of the log-in screen. Peer reviewers and journal staff will also be using the system for peer reviewing, manuscript tracking, and other correspondence. If you have not yet registered in the new system, please visit the URL above and click on "Register here" under "New User?" at the right-hand side of the log-in screen.

Peer Reviewers

If you would like to become a peer reviewer, please visit the *Hispania* online submission and review system and click on "Register here" under "New User?" at the right-hand side of the log-in screen. From there, you will be guided to enter your personal information, create a user ID and password, and choose keywords that best relate to your areas of expertise. Once you have registered in the system, you can be considered for future peer reviewing, based on the keywords you select.

Call for Reviews / Registering to Review

If you are interested in reviewing books and/or media, please contact Book/Media Review Editor Domnita Dumitrescu at **ddumitrescu@aatsp.org**. *Hispania* will not accept unsolicited reviews and does not publish reviews of works more than two years old. If you have a specific title in mind, please consult with the editor. We especially encourage offers to review film and other media resources. Members of the AATSP who wish to be considered as reviewers of book/media reviews should upload their information at **<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/hispan>** and send their CV to the Book/Media Review Editor. Publishers and authors should submit their materials for possible selection to **Domnita Dumitrescu, Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, California State University, Los Angeles, 5151 State University Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90032**. Submitted materials will not be returned to publishers or authors, even if they are not selected for review. Because of the number of works that correspond to *Hispania*'s broad scope, not all requests to review specific items can be granted. An invitation to review does not guarantee publication. All reviews must pass through a double-anonymous review process and publication decisions are based upon reviewer comments and the discretion of the editors.

Call for Production Assistants

Jennifer Brady (Managing Editor, *Hispania*) would like to invite interested members of the AATSP to serve as copy editors and proofreaders for *Hispania*. Please send your CV to Dr. Brady at **jbrady@aatsp.org** with a cover letter describing your experience copyediting manuscripts in English, Spanish, and/or Portuguese. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis.

Note of Correction

The complete bibliographical information for the following book review, which was published in the December 2015 (98.4) issue of *Hispania* on pages 835–36, is:

Ramos, E. Carmen. *Our America: The Latino Presence in American Art*. D Gills / Smithsonian American Art Museum: Washington, DC, 2014. Pp. 368. ISBN 978-1-90780-444-1.

Online Dissertation Lists

Hispania publishes annually a list of “Dissertations in Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Languages and Literatures.” We are pleased to announce that all dissertation lists from 2010–14 are now available online at <http://www.aatsp.org/?page=hispaniaopenaccess>. Starting with the September 2015 issue, lists will be published exclusively online. We encourage readers to access these important lists and share them actively within your respective programs. The forms for submitting reports on completed (defended) and in-progress dissertations are available at <http://www.xavier.edu/modern-languages/hispania/>. More information is available via email from Associate Editor David Knutson at knutson@xavier.edu.

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Disclaimer: The material published in *Hispania* reflects the opinions of the authors and are not necessarily those of the editors or the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP). The editors of *Hispania* and the AATSP, therefore, accept no liability for the views expressed in book reviews, articles, or other content of the journal.

Responses: Authors who believe that their work has been seriously misrepresented in a book review or article may send a response to the editor, who reserves the right to publish it as appropriate.

Multiple submissions: Please submit only one original article manuscript for review to *Hispania* at a time. The journal does not allow multiple (simultaneous) submissions of original manuscripts.

Resubmission of manuscripts: *Hispania* receives many more manuscripts than we can publish, and we must make difficult decisions to accept only those that make a substantial, novel contribution of broad interest. As such, manuscripts returned to authors without advancing toward publication cannot be resubmitted for review.

Production Assistance for *Hispania*

Hispania expresses its appreciation to the following individuals for their services formatting, copyediting, and proofreading in 2015. The contribution to the journal that these colleagues provide is indispensable and greatly valued.

Antonio Aiello	Lisa Huempfnér	Bridget Park
Allison Brown	Meredith Jeffers	Guadalupe Raquel Piña
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***Hispania* Reviewers for 2015**

The editors of *Hispania* and the AATSP would like to express their appreciation to the many individuals who served as reviewers for the journal in 2015.

Academic journals depend on the volunteer work of scholarly reviewers who read, critique, and evaluate the manuscripts that eventually appear in print. Each of the individuals below was invited as a reviewer due to his or her expertise in a given field of specialization. We know that serving as a reviewer is a time-consuming and often thankless task. For this reason, the names of everyone who reviewed an article or a book/media review in 2015 are listed below as a small token of our gratitude. Names are listed as they appeared in the ScholarOne database at the time of extraction. We apologize for possible errors and offer our sincerest gratitude for the services of any other individuals who might have reviewed but were inadvertently left out of this list.

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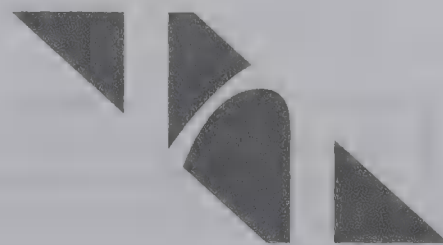
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Editor's Message

Behind the Scenes at *Hispania* and *SPR*'s Launch



The work to curate and produce *Hispania* is done in several virtual offices across the United States. Capable human capital compensates for the journal's lack of a centralized physical space. The Managing Editor is a key individual who drives many functions behind the scenes en route to publication. Every Editor-in-Chief knows that a talented Managing Editor makes daily operations run smoothly and is crucial to the quality of each issue. The Managing Editor performs a wide variety of tasks that include corresponding with authors, interfacing with our web-based peer review and tracking system, and meeting production deadlines that include copyediting and proofreading the journal.

I have been fortunate to work with a number of especially able and experienced Managing Editors during my years as Editor of *Foreign Language Annals* and subsequently *Hispania*. One of these seasoned and committed professionals is *Hispania*'s current Managing Editor, Dr. Jennifer Brady (University of Minnesota Duluth, see bio). For this issue, I asked her to write a guest editorial about the Managing Editor's role. I invite you to read it to learn about the inner workings of the journal and find out about opportunities for AATSP members to collaborate on the production of *Hispania*.

Many colleagues are unaware of the division of staff labor of a scholarly journal. Most academic journals have procedures and operations to ensure an ethical and efficient process. These processes include the vetting of potential articles and reviews, managing peer review, and shepherding manuscripts slated for publication through a multistep production process. The Editor-in-Chief directs and curates editorial content, while the Managing Editor oversees the nuts and bolts of the journal as well as its production.

Another journal that relies upon the work of its Managing Editors is the AATSP's new graduate student journal, *Spanish and Portuguese Review* (*SPR*). David P. Wiseman (AATSP Director of Communications) served as Editor of *SPR*'s inaugural issue with Julie Bezzerides (Lewis-Clark State College), Anna-Lisa Halling (University of Southern Indiana), and Cory Duclos (Colgate University) contributing their time and talents as Managing Editors over peer review, copy editing, and production, respectively. Duclos will serve as *SPR* Editor for future issues of the journal.

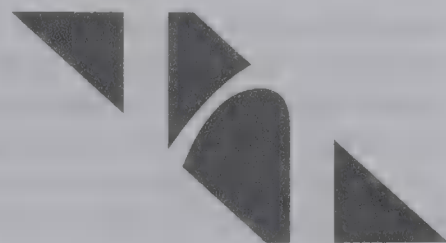
Apart from publishing quality scholarship, *SPR* was designed as a mentoring initiative. As graduate students work with the journal, they collaborate with experienced faculty editors and develop professional skills for their future professions. They also prepare to publish in and serve on editorial boards for professional journals like *Hispania*. The three *SPR* Managing Editors play a vital role in the production of the journal, as they also mentor more than forty exceptional graduate student editors from institutions across the country. I invite you to visit www.spanishandportuguesereview.org to read and share this new open access journal.

Sheri Spaine Long
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Hispania

Jennifer Brady

Jennifer Brady (PhD in Spanish, Colorado) is Assistant Professor of Hispanic Studies at University of Minnesota Duluth and Managing Editor of *Hispania*. Before being appointed Managing Editor, Brady worked for *Hispania* in various capacities: from 2008–09, she was the Assistant to the Book/Media Review Editor and, from 2012–13, she was the Assistant Managing Editor. While she is also committed to editorial work and academic publishing, her published research focuses on contemporary Spanish narrative and film. She recently coedited the volume titled *Collapse, Catastrophe, and Rediscovery: Spain's Cultural Panorama in the Twenty-First Century* in which she also wrote a chapter on Juan José Millás.

The Managing Editor's Role: Style Matters



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Colleagues often ask me what the Managing Editor of *Hispania* does. The position of Managing Editor of *Hispania* requires that I wear many hats. I manage the online submission system, ScholarOne. I operate the quarterly production of the journal. I also take on additional tasks as needed. Here, I would like to offer a glimpse into my role in the path to the publication of each issue.

The Managing Editor manages all steps of production from acceptance to publication. In 2015, I directed the production of 51 articles, 74 book and media reviews, and 22 additional features (e.g., editorials, the state-of-the-state articles, MLA convention essays). Each article and review undergoes four stages, which take about six months to complete: formatting, copyediting, pre-proofreading, and proofreading. We begin by formatting articles. In this stage, my team and I make sure that all contributions in an issue comply with the journal's style standards, and we add formatting codes for publishing. During this time, I also work with authors on readying figures and tables for publication. Three or four months prior to publication, articles are then copyedited by myself, by *Hispania*'s Assistant Managing Editor Dr. Conxita Domènech (University of Wyoming), or by one of the members of our team of Production Assistants (PAs). Most of the corrections made at this stage ensure that language (English, Spanish, and Portuguese) is clear and that our readers are supplied with accurate and current information. Editor Domènech then works with authors to make final revisions and corrections to their articles. Not only is she meticulous and detail-oriented, but she is also a critical link between *Hispania* authors and their copyedited articles.

After articles are pre-proofread by our team, I work closely with our publisher as the issue is converted to a PDF proof. I proofread the issue several times, making changes along the way. Book/Media Review Editor Dr. Domnita Dumitrescu (California State University–Los Angeles, Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española) compiles, edits, and proofreads the book/media review section for each issue. In the last stage, articles are proofread again by Editor Domènech, our PAs, and myself. After several passes of proofreading, which take between four and six weeks, I send each contribution to *Hispania*'s authors and reviewers for their final approval. If there are final corrections at the last stage of proofreading, we make them, but my hope is that last stage edits are minimal.

Hispania's Editorial Staff is supported by a group of editing experts. Our PAs, a group that includes formatters, copyeditors, and proofreaders, support us at all stages of production. All of our copyeditors and proofreaders are academic scholars and most of them are university professors. Because of their full-time professional commitments, PAs are invited to participate in tasks as they are able. Their help is indispensable. I would like to acknowledge one of our seasoned PAs. Please join me in thanking Dr. Douglas J. Weatherford (Brigham Young University), who has been copyediting and proofreading for *Hispania* for over five years. We value his sharp eye, keen

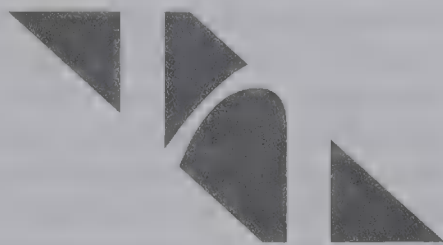
sense of humor, and prompt work. Please see a list of our Production Assistants on page 6 of this current issue and thank them for their commitment. I also invite you to consider applying to become part of our PA team since it is one of the best ways to accustom yourself to the ins and outs of scholarly publishing (see page 5 for more information).

At every step in production, my main concern as Managing Editor is that readers receive accessible and easy-to-parse, top-notch scholarship. During the production of each issue, I make sure reference lists in Works Cited sections and tables and figures provide accurate and complete information. My team and I fix the grammatical errors in three languages that are not caught during the authors' drafts or during the editorial review process, assuring that the language in *Hispania* delivers clear messages all of the time. I also make certain that each issue is coherent and uniform while preserving the unique voice and style of each contributor.

Hispania is committed to publishing well-crafted narratives of scholarship that permit knowledge to be disseminated in accessible ways. We can only do this with a uniform style. Because of this, style has got everything to do with the way in which the journal communicates with its readers. *Hispania* style includes two parts: 1) articles having to do with literature, culture, and film use MLA style (see *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, 3rd ed., 2008); and 2) articles in areas of linguistics, pedagogy, and language science employ a hybrid style adapted from the MLA and American Psychological Association (APA) style guides. Contributors that plan on submitting manuscripts or reviews to *Hispania* will find the Author Guidelines online at www.aatsp.org. I encourage you to spend time converting your submission to conform to our style for several reasons: the journal's anonymous peer reviewers are accustomed to our style and they expect to evaluate submissions that have been tailored for *Hispania*; and, if your submission is accepted, the more your article or review integrates our style guidelines from the very beginning, the easier it will be to prepare issues for publication.

Hispania's style is a tool that allows issues to convey scholarship clearly. My hope is that every time readers pick up an issue in print or access an issue online they find a polished product. As Managing Editor, my commitment to style elevates the stellar scholarship that is published in the journal, and it is a privilege to serve the profession in this capacity.

El capital cultural del español y su enseñanza como lengua extranjera en Estados Unidos



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Resumen: Aunque el español goza en Estados Unidos de un creciente capital demográfico y, por tanto, económico y social, es una lengua con escasa legitimidad cultural e intelectual por su vinculación a la inmigración y a la pobreza. El propósito de este artículo es examinar la relación entre la pujanza social y económica del español y su desprestigio cultural en Estados Unidos, así como las consecuencias de esta desigualdad de capitales en su enseñanza universitaria: por un lado, la visión instrumental del español como lengua global y, por otro, la trivialización de su sustrato cultural e intelectual. Este artículo intenta mostrar que todas estas cuestiones, que se suelen considerar de manera aislada e independiente, están íntimamente ligadas y por tanto deberían abordarse conjuntamente.

Palabras clave: capital cultural/cultural capital, commodification of language/mercantilización del lenguaje, culture/cultura, globalization/globalización, Spanish/español

Rarely, if at all, does the academy view Spanish as a language of authority or of intellectual exchange.
—Molloy 2005: 373

Capital económico, social y cultural del español

De acuerdo con Claire Kramsch (2014), la globalización ha cambiado las condiciones de uso, aprendizaje y enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, tanto en el aula como a nivel institucional. Entre otras cosas, ha creado una competición entre varias lenguas que, todavía lejos de la incuestionable hegemonía del inglés, pugnan por un lugar privilegiado en el mercado global. En esta competición, el español parece ocupar desde hace tiempo una posición ventajosa en Estados Unidos. Los tipos de capital propuestos por Bourdieu, que implican la rivalidad entre varios agentes por el dominio del poder disponible en un campo (Bourdieu y Wacquant 1992), son un buen punto de partida para comprender en qué consiste la ventaja del español y cuáles son sus limitaciones.

Pierre Bourdieu (1986) distinguió tres tipos de capital—económico, social y cultural—para dar cuenta de que la lógica del interés y el beneficio que opera en el plano económico dirige igualmente las prácticas en otros campos y dimensiones sociales, en los que también se compite por poder y legitimidad. Individuos, instituciones y, en el caso que nos ocupa, las lenguas, acumulan y administran distintos tipos de capital, de los cuales dependen su posición e influencia (Bourdieu 1978; Bourdieu y Wacquant 1992). Para ser precisos, las lenguas no son agentes que puedan usar el capital económico, social y cultural como lo hacen individuos e instituciones. Si se puede decir que las lenguas *poseen* estos tipos de capital es más bien porque materializan el poder y la legitimidad económica, social y cultural de las comunidades que se identifican con y por ellas.¹

El *capital económico* del español en Estados Unidos se basa primordialmente en el crecimiento demográfico de la comunidad hispana, cuyo número aumentó en más de 17 millones

entre el año 2.000 (35.204.480) y el 2.012 (52.932.483), pasando del 12.5% al 16.9% de la población total (Brown y Patten 2014). Las cifras son igualmente positivas si en vez de a la clasificación étnica o racial atendemos a criterios lingüísticos.² Entre 1980 y 2010, el número de estadounidenses que hablan español en el hogar aumentó en un 232.8%, de 11 a 37 millones (Ryan 2013). Este número podría alcanzar los 43.1 millones en 2020 (Ortman y Shin 2011). Estos datos son especialmente significativos si se comparan con los de las siguientes lenguas en número de hablantes: en términos proporcionales, el español es la lengua del 62% de la población que declara hablar un idioma distinto del inglés en el hogar, mientras que son significativamente más pequeños los porcentajes del chino (4.8%), el tagalog (2.6%), el vietnamita (2.3%) y el francés (2.1%) (Ryan 2013).

Si bien los datos demográficos dejan clara la relevancia del español en Estados Unidos, los 37 millones de hispanohablantes de este país son menos del 10% del número total de hablantes nativos de español en el mundo, cifrado en más de 400 millones.³ No es sorprendente, pues, que el español sea un recurso estratégico para quienes desean penetrar estos vastos mercados.

Volviendo a Estados Unidos, la compañía Nielsen estima que el poder adquisitivo de la comunidad hispana estadounidense alcanzará un trillón y medio de dólares en el año 2015 (Nielsen 2012). Si los hispanos de Estados Unidos constituyeran un mercado independiente, su poder adquisitivo los pondría dentro de las veinte economías más fuertes del mundo, por delante de países como Australia, Argentina o Sudáfrica. Otro informe calcula que el gasto de los hispanos en 2013 fue de 161.36 billones de dólares, el equivalente al 9.2% del gasto total de Estados Unidos (Experian Marketing Services 2013). De nuevo, la economía del español es todavía más apetitosa cuando se piensa en términos globales.

Es necesario insistir en que la base del capital económico del español en Estados Unidos y el resto del mundo radica en su fuerza demográfica. El mercado hispanohablante es visto como un importante objetivo económico por la suma de su poder adquisitivo, y no tanto por el poder adquisitivo individual; de hecho, en Estados Unidos la población hispana tiene un promedio de ingresos salariales más bajo que el de los demás grupos étnicos y raciales (Brown y Patten 2014).

El *capital social*, tal como lo entiende Bourdieu (1986), implica adhesión a las reglas de un grupo e inversión en sus intercambios simbólicos. A cambio, el individuo adquiere una vía de acceso a otros tipos de capital, ya sea en forma de recursos económicos (prestamos, trabajos, consejos para realizar inversiones) o beneficios culturales (por ejemplo, por medio de centros culturales, bibliotecas, instituciones educativas; Portes 1998). Este tipo de capital basado en la adhesión grupal tiene especial importancia dentro de las comunidades de trabajadores inmigrantes, las cuales se enfrentan a condiciones legales, laborales y salariales inferiores a las de los trabajadores autóctonos, por lo que se ven obligadas a crear fuertes vínculos de solidaridad entre sus miembros (Portes 1997). La existencia de una lengua común, precisamente, es uno de los factores más importantes para constituir la identidad y reafirmar la solidaridad de estas comunidades inmigrantes, como por ejemplo se puede ver en el estudio realizado por Gilda Ochoa (2004) sobre el barrio La Puente, California (39).

Por último, Bourdieu (1986) concibe el *capital cultural* como un valor que los individuos pueden adquirir y manifestar de tres formas distintas: como un sistema incorporado de disposiciones físicas y mentales—buenos modales, pronunciación cuidada, un cierto acento, la habilidad de tocar el violín o montar a caballo, de modo que la conciencia de clase social se lleva, en primer lugar, “profundamente incrustada en el cuerpo” (Bourdieu 1984)—; como una colección de objetos o bienes culturales (libros, música, arte, tecnología, instrumentos); y como una serie de diplomas y títulos ofrecidos por instituciones formativas. Aplicar la noción de capital cultural a las lenguas implica interrogar la legitimidad y el prestigio asociados a cada una de ellas como vehículos de civilización y cultura (es decir, a una especie de jerarquía de lenguas similar a la que el capital cultural establece entre las correspondientes clases sociales), el reconocimiento de sus producciones culturales (literarias, artísticas, intelectuales) y su poder institucional y académico. Los departamentos universitarios de español, así pues, son agentes

fundamentales del capital cultural de esta lengua en Estados Unidos, y en consecuencia también un buen barómetro para medir su legitimidad e influencia.

El español en la enseñanza universitaria

Si nos atenemos a los números de matrícula en los departamentos de español de Estados Unidos, la popularidad de esta lengua parece corroborar su pujanza social. Según los datos obtenidos por MLA en 2009 (Furman, Goldberg, y Lusin 2010), la matrícula de español (864.986 estudiantes) es mayor que la de todas las otras lenguas modernas juntas (764.340 estudiantes), lo cual viene siendo el caso desde 1995.

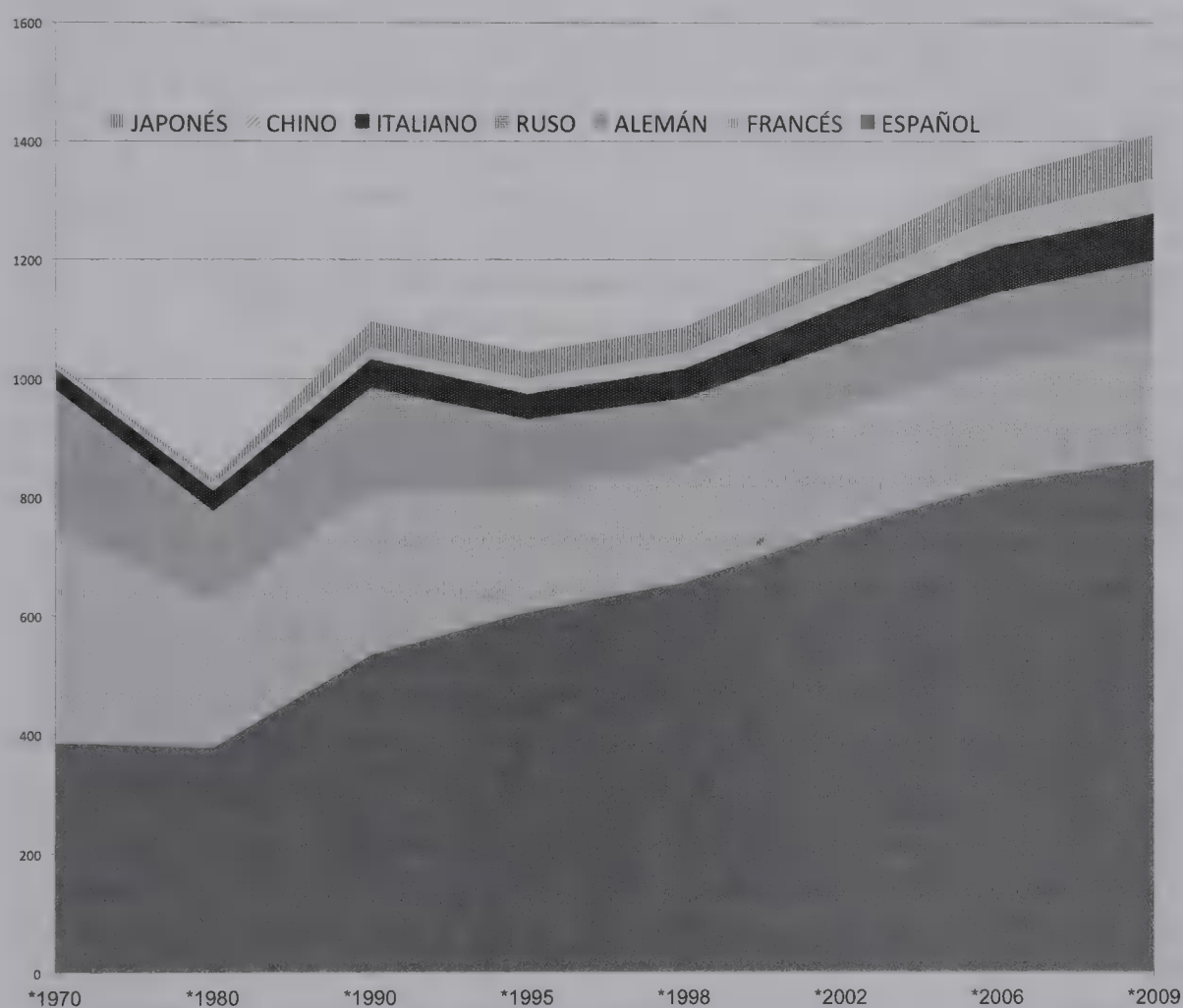


Figura 1. Distribución de la matrícula en departamentos de español, francés, italiano, ruso, alemán, chino y japonés, en miles de estudiantes (1970–2009). Fuente: MLA (Language Enrollment Database, 1958–2009).

Es más, las cifras del español siguen una firme trayectoria ascendente, mucho más marcada que la de otras lenguas también en crecimiento, como el chino y el japonés.

A pesar de estos datos positivos, en muchos de los análisis sobre la fortuna del español en la enseñanza superior aparece de manera explícita e insistente la tensión entre el valor económico y social de esta lengua y su desprestigio cultural.

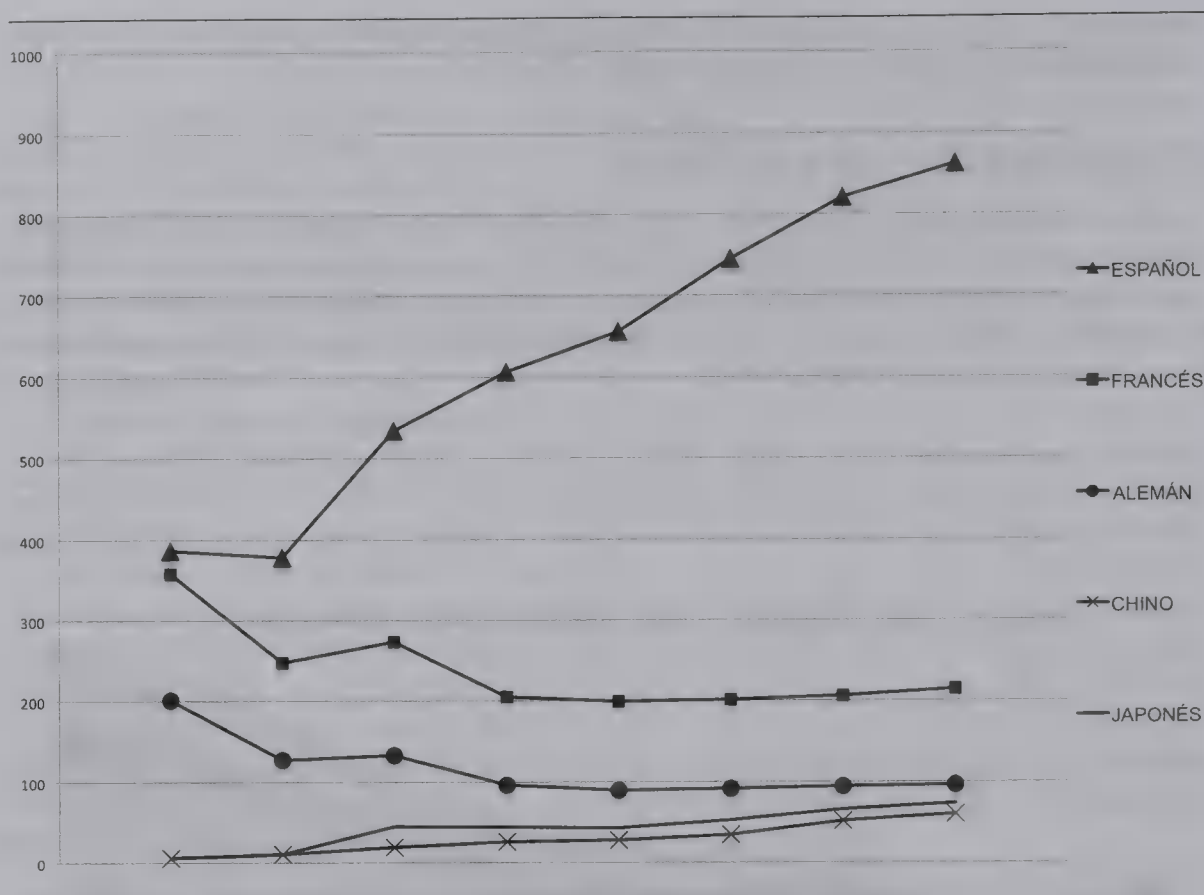


Figura 2. Evolución de la matrícula en departamentos de español, francés, alemán, chino y japonés, en miles de estudiantes (1970–2009). Fuente: MLA (Language Enrollment Database, 1958–2009).

Por ejemplo, en un foro organizado por la Asociación de Departamentos de Lenguas Extranjeras en 1997 para analizar el futuro del español en las universidades estadounidenses, Cristina González recurría a la pujanza económica y social del español para explicar el aumento en la matrícula: “Many jobs require knowledge of Spanish, and young people are aware of this fact. How can they not be if they hear their classmates speak Spanish and see Spanish on the labels of many products they buy? . . . Businesses, government, and social service agencies also need college graduates who not only speak Spanish but also truly understand Hispanic culture” (González 1997: 37–38). Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo que celebraba la buena salud del español, se preocupaba también por su legitimidad: “We study and teach the cultures of people who, for the most part, are neither rich nor white, and our programs are regarded by many as not very important” (38).

Según James Fernández, en los primeros documentos de la American Association of Teachers of Spanish (AATS) y su revista *Hispania* aparece ya el malestar por la falta de prestigio cultural del español. En opinión de Fernández, el español es hoy la lengua más popular en la enseñanza estadounidense gracias a su lado más mundano, es decir a su valor social y geopolítico, y no a su tradición literaria e intelectual, como algunas veces se ha querido ver:

There are those who would like to be able to narrate the now two-hundred-year-old ‘rise of Spanish’ in terms of the immanent value of great cultural figures: Cervantes, Darío, Unamuno, and Borges. But the archive that documents the rise of Spanish, including our two fragments, practically imposes other, much more mundane headings. The Latin American wars of independence and the Monroe Doctrine; the wars of 1898, World War I, and Pan-Americanism; World War II and the Good Neighbor Policy; the cold war; the Cuban Revolution; the migratory crises of the late twentieth century: these are the forces that have driven enrollments and

shaped the institutional will to include Spanish in the American curriculum. This worldliness is both the greatest strength of Hispanic studies in this country and the greatest source of spoken and unspoken anxiety. (2000: 1963)

La misma idea aparece en un texto de John M. Lipski (2002) publicado en *PMLA*:

The good news is that Spanish has risen above all the junk language and demeaning pseudo-babble to become a high-demand course of study at American universities. Despite the frustratingly large number of negative stereotypes and accompanying bad karma surrounding the Spanish language and its speakers within the United States, many of our students—dare I hope more than half?—pick Spanish as the second language of choice for more encouraging reasons. (1249)

¿Cuáles son estas razones? Un reciente estudio de Comfort Pratt (2010), “Maintaining the Momentum of Students of Spanish from High School to College”, apunta que los factores que determinan si un estudiante sigue cursando español en la universidad son fundamentalmente utilitarios. En concreto, los más repetidos son la posibilidad de obtener buenas notas, ser capaz de usar español en la vida diaria, obtener ventajas en la carrera profesional, y pasárselo bien en clase. La idea de obtener buenas notas seguramente tenga que ver con dos de los motivos que apunta Lipski para explicar los números de matrícula del español: el hecho de que sea la lengua más enseñada en *high school* y la “leyenda urbana” de que es la lengua más fácil, tanto que “[it] can be acquired at the drop of a sombrero” (2002: 1248–49). Los otros dos factores más relevantes según el estudio de Pratt (la posibilidad de usar el español en la vida diaria y sus supuestas ventajas profesionales) nos devuelven al capital social y económico de la lengua, también presentes en el texto de Lipski: “Spanish is useful, not just for reading the instructions on a box of frozen enchiladas but also for *aspiring to a vast array of interesting and challenging job opportunities, for interacting effectively with millions of our neighbors both in this country and abroad*, and for understanding and appreciating a very large, diverse, and significant portion of the world” (1249; el subrayado es mío).

En definitiva, en esta muestra de textos vemos una clara conciencia de la tensión entre la falta de legitimidad del español en Estados Unidos y su pujanza en términos de matrícula. En ellos encontramos también el deseo de conciliar los dos polos en tensión, es decir, de hacer valer el capital económico y social de la lengua que está detrás de la matrícula para mejorar su capital cultural. En concreto, las propuestas para cambiar la manera de concebir la enseñanza de español por parte de las administraciones universitarias y los propios departamentos incluyen la colaboración estrecha con escuelas profesionales y con la comunidad hispana (González 1997), la integración de la eurocéntrica tradición intelectual del Hispanismo con la más mundana realidad social e histórica del español americano (Fernández 2000), y la aceptación e institución del español como “part of the assumed background of American university education” (Lipski 2002: 1251).

En un artículo más reciente, Jennifer Leeman (2006) repite el mismo diagnóstico: “Enrollments should be attributed less to an increase in the prestige value of Spanish than to the commodification of language and the contemporary fixation on the marketability of particular types of knowledge and education” (38). Aunque el conflicto de fondo es idéntico, al final de su artículo Leeman advierte que celebrar los números de matrícula de manera acrítica implica aceptar la idea de que las lenguas son ante todo habilidades o recursos que se pueden adquirir y explotar, idea que, al contrario, debería cuestionar una educación con vocación crítica, igual que debería exponer y cuestionar los valores adscritos a las distintas lenguas y el origen de tales valoraciones.

Leeman acierta al situar el “problema” del español en el marco más amplio de la concepción de las lenguas como recursos (*commodification of language*), y también al aconsejar una visión crítica de la tensión entre la buena fortuna del español en la enseñanza universitaria y su falta de legitimidad simbólica.

El valor del español como “activo económico” se debe a su condición de lengua global, es decir, a su historia de lengua impuesta por el colonialismo y difundida por la inmigración. Esa misma condición de lengua global que le otorga al español capital económico y social es el origen de los prejuicios racistas y de clase que debilitan su capital cultural en Estados Unidos, donde se enfrenta al doble estigma de ser la lengua de los indígenas colonizados, los conquistados, los subdesarrollados, los pobres inmigrantes (Aparicio 2000; García y Mason 2009),⁴ y de ser una variedad inferior del español, “deformada”⁵ y contaminada por la influencia del inglés (García 2011).⁶ De ahí que sea, cuando menos, problemático adherirse acríticamente a la lógica del capital económico y social del español, pues esa lógica se apoya en la trivialización de su valor cultural, intelectual y simbólico.

Las lenguas como recursos

Según Monica Heller y Alexandre Duchêne (2011), desde los años 90 ha ido ganando relevancia una nueva manera de entender el lenguaje y se ha ido articulando un nuevo discurso sobre las lenguas minoritarias y el bilingüismo. Estas cuestiones, que antes se formulaban en términos de *identidad*, de *derechos*, de *preservación lingüística y cultural*, hoy se plantean fundamentalmente en términos económicos. Este giro discursivo supone pasar de ver las lenguas como una cuestión de orgullo nacional (*pride*) a verlas como un recurso o activo (*profit*). La concepción de la *lengua como recurso* y las nuevas maneras de producir y hacer circular el lenguaje en el mercado global conllevan un cambio de paradigma: las lenguas ya no son manifestaciones culturales o signos de identidad nacional sino, ante todo instrumentos de comunicación y habilidades que se pueden adquirir, medir y reglamentar.

La nueva concepción instrumental de las lenguas y, en general, el lenguaje, es propia del “capitalismo tardío”, una fase que se distingue por la proliferación de flujos (de capital, de individuos, de información) que atraviesan las fronteras de la nación estado, y por la consolidación de una nueva economía global basada en el sector terciario (Heller y Duchêne 2011). En el capitalismo tardío adquieren especial importancia la comunicación y los *recursos lingüísticos*, ya que de ellos depende la efectividad de las transacciones realizadas dentro del nuevo marco transnacional (Heller 2010). Desde esta perspectiva instrumental, la diversidad y la variedad de las lenguas, así como su lado menos sistemático y predecible, se ven ante todo como obstáculos que se pueden salvar mediante tecnologías lingüísticas (como Google Translate, World Lens, Skype Translator, SDL Language Cloud), pautas de adiestramiento y control (Cameron 2000, 2002), la promoción del inglés como lengua franca (Pennycook 1995, 1998; Singh y Han 2008; Park y Wee 2012) o la contratación de personal plurilingüe (Heller 2003; Sonntag 2009; Alarcón y Heyman 2013).

En cualquier caso, instrumentalizar la lengua conlleva una tensión inherente con su autenticidad cultural, la cual en muchas ocasiones se trivializa y cosifica. Dicho de otro modo, explotar el valor de una lengua como recurso implica desligarla de su autenticidad y concebirla como una mera habilidad técnica útil para la gestión de negocios o políticas globales. Como observa Thomas Ricento (2005), la concepción de la lengua como recurso ha servido siempre a intereses económicos y geopolíticos que nada tienen que ver con el respeto de los pueblos y culturas para los que es un signo de identidad. Al contrario:

the employment of such discourses tends to perpetuate a view of language as instrument (as opposed to language as identity marker), and, by doing so, seeks to garner support for the teaching and learning of heritage languages by de-linking language from ethnicity or race. In other words, the view promoted is of language as commodity, displaced from its historical situation, a tool to be developed for particular national interests. (121)

En su libro *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*, Jan Blommaert (2010) argumenta que es la movilidad de una lengua o un recurso lingüístico lo que determina su valor en el mercado global.

Lenguas y recursos lingüísticos tienen más valor cuanto más se puedan mover, en cuantos más lugares y estratos sociales puedan utilizarse. Así, la misma movilidad y difusión del español, que por un lado le otorga un gran capital económico y social, conlleva que, por otro lado, sea más difícil localizarlo y representarlo en el marco de una tradición cultural e intelectual única. Este desarraigo del español y, en general, de las lenguas que cotizan simultáneamente en el mercado global y en mercados locales, conlleva también que sea posible apropiarse de los recursos lingüísticos sin la necesidad de identificarse con su sustrato cultural (Van Leeuwen 2009).

Es más, la revalorización de una lengua global como el español revitaliza la tensión entre sus variedades “periféricas” y otras variedades con más legitimidad. Como ocurre con los recursos materiales, la posesión de los recursos lingüísticos es permanente objeto de disputa. Ante todo entre el “centro” y la “periferia” (Del Valle 2006, 2011, 2014; Mar-Molinero 2008; Paffey y Mar-Molinero 2009; Mar-Molinero y Paffey 2011), pero también entre los hablantes nativos de español (sobre todo los de variedades “periféricas”) y los que han aprendido una variedad más estándar de esta lengua en la enseñanza reglada.⁷ La misma lengua que es para unos un valioso recurso, puede suponer para otros un obstáculo. Así, mientras que en las universidades de Estados Unidos se promueve la idea de que estudiar español significa invertir en un capital lingüístico que los estudiantes norteamericanos (futuros doctores, abogados, empresarios) podrán utilizar de manera legítima (Pomerantz 2006), la misma lengua supone una desventaja para muchos de sus hablantes nativos (Alarcón y Heyman 2013; García 1995). En este sentido, es pertinente la idea de Nikolas Coupland (2003) de que la “autenticidad sociolingüística” es cada vez menos un rasgo de herencia que uno se pueda atribuir solo por el hecho de pertenecer a una comunidad y haber sido socializado en ella; en nuestro mundo global, multicultural e hiperconectado, la autenticidad depende más bien de ser capaz de actualizar recursos lingüísticos (acentos, repertorios, estilos) de los que uno se apropia por medio de un complejo proceso de identificación y aprendizaje.

La concepción de las lenguas como recursos, en definitiva, hay que verla en el marco de la ideología neoliberal y su necesidad de disponer de mano de obra flexible y adaptable, preparada para las necesidades comunicativas de un mercado global: esta es precisamente una de las fuerzas motoras en la revalorización del multilingüismo (Flores 2013). Desde el punto de vista neoliberal, el dominio de “lenguas extranjeras” es una forma de *capital humano*, una habilidad o competencia adquirida que no se puede separar del individuo y que lo capacita para rendir beneficios futuros (Foucault, 2008).

Pero la visión económica de la lengua no se centra solo en su valor instrumental, sino que se apodera también de su autenticidad cultural, cosificándola y explotándola como signo de distinción (Heller y Duchêne 2011). Hay una continuidad, pues, entre *pride* y *profit*, entre la visión de la lengua como reflejo del espíritu y el orgullo nacional propia del siglo XIX (Hobsbawm 1992), y la noción de la lengua como un recurso o capital económico en el capitalismo tardío. Como ha demostrado Bourdieu (2001), ya en el primer paradigma la lengua es un recurso, en la medida en que marca a su portador como un hablante legítimo y lo capacita para operar en el mercado lingüístico nacional donde se usa, otorgando privilegios a los hablantes de unas variedades y marcando negativamente a los de otras. Pero incluso ahora, en un mercado global, el beneficio de un recurso lingüístico es más que una cuestión meramente funcional: el valor añadido de una lengua extranjera no se basa solo en la capacidad de comunicarse en ella con efectividad; antes bien, se trata de *un rasgo de distinción* de naturaleza ideológica, mediante el cual se establece una jerarquía de hablantes basada en el acceso, la posesión y el dominio de determinados recursos lingüísticos.

Legitimidad y Representación Cultural del Español

Naturalmente, la visión de la lengua como recurso se refleja en el currículo del español. Lo podemos ver en el análisis que hace Deborah Herman (2007) de los cuatro libros con mayor

difusión en *high school*.⁸ Según Herman, en ellos se manifiestan de manera implícita la hegemonía del inglés y los estereotipos asociados al español y a los países en donde se habla esta lengua. Para empezar, todos enseñan primordialmente a hacer compras, a moverse de un lugar a otro en distintos medios de transporte y a obtener diversos tipos de alojamiento. A la vista de ello, en estos libros de texto se transmite una idea instrumental del lenguaje y la idea implícita de que la educación en español consiste en prepararse para ir de vacaciones o de viaje a destinos exóticos. De hecho, en los libros de texto (y sobre todo en los de nivel inicial) es habitual el enfoque de la guía de viaje: cada unidad presenta uno o dos países en los que se habla español. Aunque este enfoque responde en principio a la loable intención de incluir la variedad de los países y las culturas hispanohablantes, tiene el efecto de que al presentar cada país, por falta de espacio (y porque las prioridades son otras), los libros se limitan a unos pocos datos arbitrarios, superficiales y fuera de contexto, los cuales normalmente refuerzan ideas preconcebidas y pintorescas.

La trivialización de la cultura existe también en los manuales de español de nivel universitario. Teniendo en cuenta que, como hemos visto, la cosificación de la cultura es una de las implicaciones de concebir la lengua como un recurso, no es sorprendente que en los libros de texto universitarios las culturas hispanohablantes sean reducidas a una serie de curiosidades arbitrarias que confirman una imagen estereotipada y simplista. Así, en el libro *Puntos de Partida*, cada país hispanohablante es identificado por medio de tres ideas o símbolos. Venezuela, por ejemplo, es asociado con las mujeres (“muchos dicen que es el país de las mujeres bellas”), la rumba (“al venezolano le gusta organizar y celebrar fiestas en las cuales siempre se baila salsa, merengue o cualquier otro ritmo caribeño, hasta el amanecer”) y la harina de maíz blanco (“ingrediente principal de dos de los platos típicos del país”) (Dorwick, Pérez Gironés, Becher e Isabelli 2012: 344).

En contraste con la abundancia de folclore, celebridades y gastronomía, llama la atención la ausencia de vocabulario y unidades culturales relacionados con cuestiones sociales (Herman 2007; Ros i Solé 2013; Cubillos 2014). Esta omisión se basa en el conservadurismo general de los libros de texto, y también en la idea aceptada de que los estudiantes no tienen dominio de los discursos que requieren ese tipo de vocabulario. Sin embargo, es posible integrar un enfoque crítico desde los primeros niveles de la enseñanza, incluso trabajando con un libro que no fomenta una perspectiva socio-política (ver, por ejemplo, Vinall 2012; Glynn, Wesely, y Wassell 2015).

En la omisión de contenidos polémicos influyen sobre todo prejuicios bien arraigados sobre el papel de los instructores y las clases de lengua (Kramsch 1991). En los libros, la cultura es un mero condimento colorista porque a los instructores de lengua no les corresponde tocar cuestiones políticas, éticas o de clase social, porque la prioridad de las clases de lengua es desarrollar competencias comunicativas, no profundizar en cuestiones culturales (como si ambas empresas fuesen incompatibles). El rol funcional de las clases y los instructores de lengua se aviene como un guante a la visión del español como recurso o *commodity*. Además, contribuye a silenciar oportunamente las cuestiones históricas, políticas y sociales en las que se cimienta el desprestigio del español en Estados Unidos. La falta de contenidos sociales o políticos es de por sí una cuestión política, igual que lo son la elección de los materiales culturales y la perspectiva desde la que son representados. La enseñanza de una lengua minoritaria, como el español en Estados Unidos, es a la fuerza una actividad cargada políticamente.

En suma, los libros de texto no son artefactos neutrales y libres de injerencia ideológica. Al contrario, las representaciones culturales y las prioridades curriculares inscritas en ellos construyen una determinada imagen del español y las comunidades hispanohablantes, a la vez que articulan una determinada posición subjetiva desde la que los estudiantes pueden contemplar cómodamente el mundo hispánico, ya sea en el papel de empresarios, trotamundos o turistas, o bien en el de consumidores de estilos de vida cosmopolitas (Ros i Solé 2013). En este sentido, los libros de español se prestan a un análisis ideológico similar al que Edward Said (1979) hizo del orientalismo, pues no parecen producidos con el fin de familiarizar al estudiante estadounidense

con las culturas y sociedades de habla hispana, sino elaborados su propia identidad cultural al ponerla en contraste con la de un mundo hispánico imaginario.⁹

La clase de lengua, en definitiva, es un lugar idóneo para cuestionar las representaciones culturales y la posición subjetiva que proponen los libros de texto, o para prescindir directamente de ellos y optar en cambio por materiales y perspectivas que impliquen más íntegramente a los estudiantes (Ros i Solé 2013). Asimismo, también hay lugar para abordar críticamente la manera en que se distribuye y se negocia el poder entre las lenguas y los registros lingüísticos (Del Valle 2014). De hecho, las nuevas condiciones de fluidez e hibridez semiótica creadas por la globalización hacen que la capacidad de distinguir acentos, géneros y estilos y reconocer las diferencias sociales, culturales y políticas que connotan sea esencial incluso para quienes solo quieren usar la lengua con fines prácticos (Kramsch 2014). Por tanto, el principal reto de los programas de español es la inclusión de complejidad en el currículo, reflejando por un lado la variedad sociolingüística de la lengua y, por otro, abordando las cuestiones culturales, ya desde los primeros niveles, de una manera sofisticada, crítica, comprometida y apropiada a la educación universitaria.

Conclusión

En este artículo hemos analizado críticamente una serie de cuestiones que se suelen considerar de manera aislada e independiente, tratando de mostrar que están íntimamente ligadas y que, por tanto, sería conveniente abordarlas conjuntamente. Partiendo de la relación directa entre la pujanza social y económica del español y su desprestigio cultural en Estados Unidos, ambos debidos a su posición como lengua global, hemos intentado mostrar que la escasa legitimidad del español facilita la tendencia a concebir esta lengua como recurso, como una competencia que se puede adquirir sin necesidad de comprometerse con su autenticidad cultural, o como un simple signo de distinción o de estilo. Esta tendencia la hemos situado en el marco más amplio de lo que en sociolingüística se denomina *commodification of language* (Heller 2003, 2010; Heller y Duchêne 2011), y hemos mostrado cómo se manifiesta en la trivialización de los contenidos culturales en los libros de español y en la visión de la enseñanza de lengua como una labor instrumental y acrítica.

Terminamos indicando una última conexión: el rol subalterno de las clases y los instructores de español hay que verlo también en relación con el modelo departamental basado en la división jerárquica entre el currículo de lengua y el de literatura.¹⁰ El que los instructores de lengua tengan en muchos casos una condición laboral distinta y se les excluya de las estructuras de poder de los departamentos contribuye a la percepción de que las clases de lengua que se imparten en los “niveles inferiores” tienen un valor meramente instrumental y están al cargo de individuos menos capacitados que los profesores de literatura, quienes administran en exclusividad el capital cultural de la lengua. Esta situación es especialmente problemática en el caso del español, dados los prejuicios asociados a él, y compromete la legitimidad intelectual y las aspiraciones institucionales de los propios departamentos, por más que siga aumentando la matrícula.

NOTAS

¹ Bourdieu (2001) habla también de capital lingüístico. No obstante, este se refiere sobre todo al rendimiento simbólico que otorgan las variedades (dialectos, sociolectos, jergas especializadas) de mayor prestigio, o las autorizadas a funcionar en un determinado campo o mercado lingüístico (ver nota 10). Así, el capital lingüístico está ante todo relacionado con la posición social, y Bourdieu (2001) parece identificarlo con el capital cultural, el cual tiene un alcance más general (84–85). Sin embargo, a mi modo de ver, la legitimidad y el poder de las lenguas puede deberse no solo a factores culturales, sino también a factores económicos y sociales, y por tanto el rendimiento que otorgan a sus hablantes puede operar independientemente en cualquiera de esos tres planos.

² Ambas categorías, por lo demás, están íntimamente ligadas en los datos del censo de Estado Unidos. La lengua (o, mejor dicho, el legado lingüístico, se conserve o no) es el criterio de una categoría tan vaga como *Hispanic*, la cual, como reconoce el propio censo, no es una categoría racial (Leeman 2004).

³ 400 millones según Moreno Fernández y Otero Roth (2007); 415 millones de acuerdo con *Ethnologue* (Lewis, Simons, y Fenning 2014).

⁴ Esta valoración ideológica del español como lengua de las clases desfavorecidas concuerda con los trabajos de la antropóloga Jane Hill sobre el *junk* o *mock Spanish* (la incorporación jocosa o peyorativa de expresiones o rasgos del español en el inglés), y también con los análisis de Adam Schwartz (2006) y de David Divita (2014) sobre el llamado *household Spanish*, el registro especializado que pueden estudiar los patrones para comunicarse con sus empleadas domésticas mexicanas o centroamericanas.

⁵ Así es como define el Spanglish el diccionario de la R.A.E. en su 23a edición: “Modalidad del habla de algunos grupos hispanos de los Estados Unidos, en la que se mezclan, deformándolos, elementos léxicos y gramaticales del español y del inglés”.

⁶ Es importante indicar que los mismos prejuicios se reproducen dentro de los departamentos universitarios donde el español se enseña como lengua extranjera (Valdés, González, López García, y Márquez 2003).

⁷ Heller (2003) observa el mismo fenómeno en el Canadá francófono, donde en los años 90 y los primeros años del siglo XXI se empezó a ver la pertenencia a una comunidad bilingüe como una ventaja en el mercado laboral y un recurso turístico.

⁸ En concreto ¡Buen Viaje!, ¡En español!, *Realidades* y ¡Exprésate! De acuerdo con Herman (2007), los cuatro juntos suponen un 80% del mercado estadounidense del español a nivel de *high school*.

⁹ La tendencia a contemplar las cuestiones culturales en estos términos parece irreprimible: como muestra Ros i Solé (2013), en los libros de español publicados en España esta figura exótica y pintoresca del Otro la suelen ocupar las culturas hispanohablantes latinoamericanas.

¹⁰ Para un diagnóstico de esta brecha departamental y sus consecuencias, ver Kern (2002) y MLA (2007).

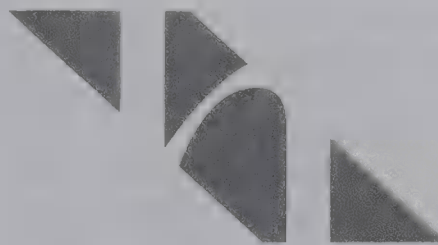
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Examining the Simple View of Reading Model for United States High School Spanish Students



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Abstract: The Simple View of Reading (SVR) model, which posits that reading comprehension is the product of word decoding and language comprehension that make independent contributions to reading skill, has been found to explain the acquisition of first language (L1) reading and second language (L2) reading in young English language learners (ELLs). Researchers have not examined the SVR for explaining L2 reading acquisition in older L2 learners several years after they acquired literacy in their L1. In this investigation, 165 US secondary level students in high school Spanish courses were administered measures of Spanish word decoding, reading comprehension, phonemic awareness, language comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency. Multiple regression analyses revealed that Spanish word decoding explained 35% and Spanish language comprehension explained 31% of the variance in Spanish reading comprehension. Participants were classified as having high, average, and low levels of Spanish reading comprehension and compared on all testing measures. Results revealed overall group differences with high-achieving Spanish readers exhibiting significantly stronger skills than average and low groups on all measures. Findings support the SVR model for older L2 readers and suggest that once a certain level of word decoding in the L2 is attained, L2 language comprehension and L2 vocabulary may be the limiting factors for proficient L2 reading comprehension.

Keywords: comprehension/comprensión, decoding/decodificación, second language/segunda lengua, Spanish reading/lectura española, vocabulary/vocabulario

1. Introduction

Over the last two decades, reading researchers have studied extensively how children learn to read their first language (L1) and a second, or foreign, language (L2, for the purpose of this paper). Researchers agree that learning to read involves learning how one's writing system encodes one's spoken language (Perfetti and Dunlap 2008). In learning to read alphabetic languages, children begin by acquiring word decoding skills in which they map symbols (letters) to speech sounds. As decoding becomes increasingly automatized, they can focus their cognitive resources on obtaining meaning from the text instead of decoding every word (e.g., see reviews by Koda 2007; Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky, and Seidenberg 2001).

Numerous models of the reading process have been proposed by reading researchers. Most models include the relationship between top-down comprehension processes and bottom-up word decoding processes (Verhoeven, Reitsma, and Siegel 2011), and reading has been found to be an interactive process in which an individual employs both graphic (bottom-up) and contextual (top-down) processes to understanding the meaning of what is read (Verhoeven and Perfetti 2008). One model that explicitly incorporates both bottom-up and top-down processes is

the Simple View of Reading (SVR), which proposes that reading is the product of word decoding and language comprehension (Gough and Tunmer 1986). In L1 reading research, the SVR model has generated considerable empirical support in explaining the important components of L1 reading. The SVR model was proposed as a parsimonious model for tracking the development of reading skills in primary level Spanish-English bilingual students living in the United States through the upper elementary grades (Hoover and Gough 1990). Since then, L2 researchers have found that the SVR model is relevant for explaining the development of L2 reading skill in alphabetic orthographies (e.g., Verhoeven and van Leeuwe 2012).

While there has been a great deal of research on how young Spanish-speaking students learn to read English (i.e., English Language Learners (ELL) (see August and Shanahan 2006a), little is known about how native English speakers who learned to read English orthography many years earlier learn to read Spanish many years later. At one time, L2 educators assumed that the procedures used to read words were similar in all alphabetic orthographies, but recent studies have revealed that variables such as orthographic consistency of the writing system and the spoken characteristics of a language may influence the process of word recognition (Defior, Martos, and Cary 2002). English is a language with a deep (opaque) orthography in which the spelling of words is represented by sound-symbol relationships that are often irregular. On the other hand, Spanish is a language with a shallow (transparent) orthography in which phoneme-grapheme relationships are highly consistent and a word's spelling is more likely to convey its pronunciation.

To our knowledge, researchers have not examined how US high school students learning to read an L2 many years after they became literate in their L1 acquire L2 literacy in a second alphabetic orthography. Likewise, no studies have examined whether the SVR model may explain differences in L2 literacy skills for L2 learners who are acquiring reading (and writing) skills at the same time they are learning to speak and understand the L2. In the next sections, we describe the SVR model and review empirical support for the model in explaining L1 and L2 reading. Then, we review research findings on the roles of L2 word decoding and L2 oral proficiency, including L2 vocabulary, for explaining L2 reading skill.

1.1 Simple View of Reading

In L1 reading research, the Simple View of Reading (SVR) model (Gough and Tunmer 1986; Hoover and Gough 1990) has garnered considerable empirical support as a theoretical model for its accuracy in explaining students' reading skills. The SVR proposes that reading is the product of word decoding and language comprehension. Word decoding requires knowledge of the speech sounds (phonemes) in words (phonemic awareness) and the alphabetic system by which those sounds are represented in print (phonics). Language comprehension represents the linguistic processes used for the comprehension of oral language at the word level (vocabulary) and the level of connected text (text comprehension). Facility with and engagement in reading text further enhances language comprehension because exposure to the language in text improves vocabulary and background knowledge as well as the understanding of more complex syntactic structures. The SVR asserts that word decoding is necessary but not sufficient for reading comprehension; likewise, language comprehension is necessary but not sufficient for reading comprehension. Fluency, or sufficient speed in decoding words, is crucial to support comprehension (see Figure 1). The model also proposes that decoding and language comprehension make independent contributions to reading skill. In L1 reading, there is considerable empirical support for the SVR model (e.g., Aouad and Savage 2009). Researchers investigating the model have found that word decoding skill explains more variance than language comprehension in the early stages of learning to read, whereas the contribution of language comprehension increases in the later grades after sufficient proficiency in word decoding is attained (e.g., Francis, Fletcher, Catts, and Tomblin 2005). In a recent meta-analysis of 110 studies with native L1 readers ranging

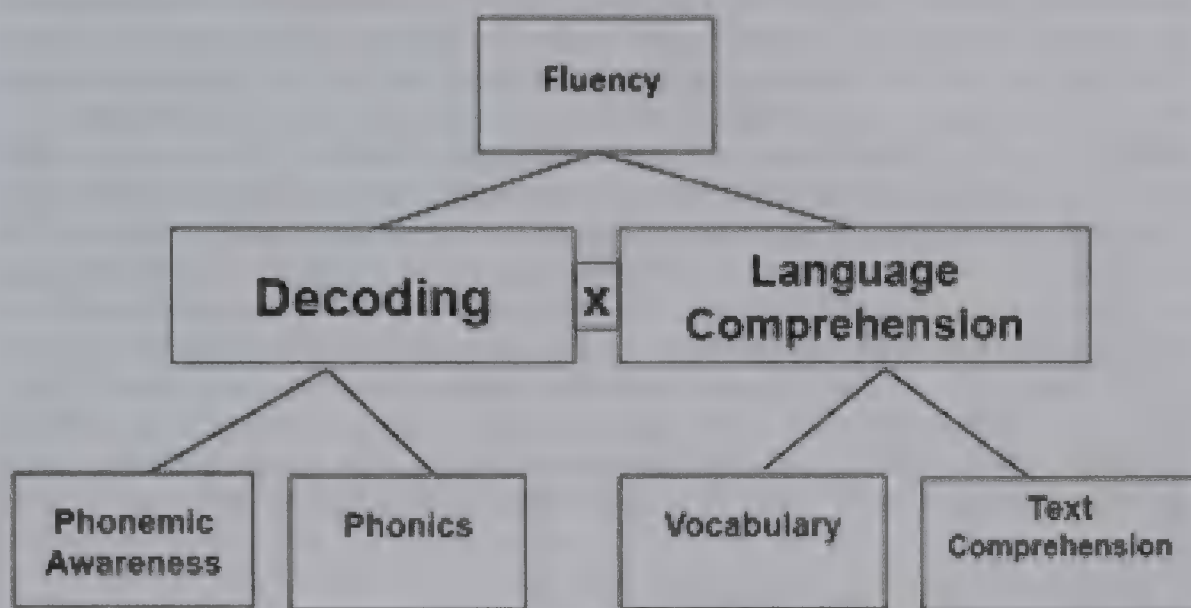


Figure 1. Simple view of reading model

from 5–53 years, García and Cain (2014) found a sizable correlation ($r = .74$) between decoding and reading comprehension from childhood to adulthood in readers of English, but the decoding–reading comprehension relationship decreased with increasing age and was moderated by an individual’s level of language comprehension.

Koda (2007) asserts that the SVR model can explain acquisition of L2 reading skills in alphabetic languages, and recent research supports her view. For example, in a study with Turkish-speaking students learning to read Dutch, Droop and Verhoeven (2003) found that both word decoding and oral language comprehension contributed independently and significantly to reading comprehension. Proctor, Carlo, August, and Snow (2005) tested the model with native Spanish speakers and found that English word-level reading skills were related to English reading comprehension and that English listening comprehension and English vocabulary were significantly and independently related to English reading comprehension. In a longitudinal study with Spanish-speaking English language learners, Nakamoto, Lindsey, and Manis (2008) found that both word decoding and oral language comprehension contributed to reading comprehension. With young ELL children, Gottardo and Mueller (2009) found that both English oral language proficiency and word decoding are necessary for efficient English reading comprehension. In an investigation with a large number of Dutch students followed through elementary school, word decoding and language comprehension, including vocabulary, significantly predicted reading comprehension in the early grades (Verhoeven and van Leeuwe 2008). In a more recent study, Verhoeven and van Leeuwe (2012) reported that the reading comprehension skills of both L1 and L2 learners can be predicted from their language (listening) comprehension and word decoding abilities. Similar to findings from other studies, they reported that the power of L2 word decoding to predict L2 reading comprehension diminishes over time, while the influence of L2 language comprehension and vocabulary increases.

1.2 L2 Word Decoding and L2 Reading

Until recently, little was known about the role of word decoding for L2 reading comprehension. Recent research by L2 investigators has found that efficient word decoding skills are critical for successful L2 reading comprehension. For example, in a study with Farsi-speaking

adults learning to read English, Nassaji and Geva (1999) found that both L2 phonological and orthographic information contributed significantly to L2 reading comprehension. In a study with Dutch secondary level students learning English, van Gelderen et al. (2004) found strong correlations between L2 word recognition and sentence verification speed with L2 reading comprehension. Proctor, Carlo, August, and Snow (2005) reported that both L2 oral language skills and word decoding make separate and independent contributions to L2 reading comprehension in young Spanish-English bilingual students. Mancilla-Martínez and Lesaux (2010) found that word decoding and oral vocabulary contributed to the prediction of reading comprehension skills for 11-year-old Spanish-speaking children. In a longitudinal study Sparks et al. (2008) found that L2 word decoding was the best predictor of L2 reading comprehension in US high school students studying Spanish, French, and German. In other studies, Sparks et al. have found that US high school L2 learners with stronger L2 word decoding have stronger L2 reading comprehension (see review by Sparks 2012). Studies with postsecondary L2 learners whose native language is English have revealed similar findings (e.g., see Meschyan and Hernández 2002).

1.3 L2 Oral Proficiency and L2 Reading

In recent years, a large body of evidence has shown that various components of L2 oral proficiency play a critical role in L2 reading performance. For example, Droop and Verhoeven (2003) reported that the smaller foreign language (L2) vocabularies of L2 learners impede efficient L2 reading comprehension. Also, limited oral proficiency in the L2 has been found to be linked to poorer L2 reading comprehension (Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, and Christian 2006). Proctor et al. (2005) reported that L2 listening comprehension makes an independent, proximal contribution to L2 reading comprehension, whereas L2 vocabulary has both proximal and distant relationships with reading comprehension. Verhoeven and van Leeuwe (2012) reviewed evidence showing the role of oral proficiency in an L2 becomes more prominent than word decoding skill for explaining the acquisition of reading comprehension skill as a student progresses through the elementary grades.

Large variations have been found in the quantity and quality of L2 vocabulary knowledge in L2 readers and the semantic networks of L2 learners appear to be less well-developed than those of L1 learners. For example, Vermeer (2001) found that L2 learners have fewer associative links between words than L1 learners. Bernhardt (2005) reported evidence which shows that L2 learners can experience difficulties with L2 sentence comprehension because of problems with vocabulary. In a recent study, Lervåg and Aukrust (2010) found that individual differences in L2 decoding and L2 vocabulary predicted initial L2 reading comprehension skills, but only vocabulary predicted growth in reading comprehension over time. In a comprehensive report, the National Literacy Panel (2000) found that low oral proficiency and poor vocabulary knowledge are important factors in poor L2 reading comprehension of language-minority children (August and Shanahan 2006b). Similarly, Proctor et al. (2005) have found that given sufficient L2 word decoding ability, L2 oral proficiency and L2 vocabulary knowledge are crucial determinants of L2 reading comprehension for Spanish-speaking ELLs.

2. Purpose of Current Study and Research Questions

Despite considerable evidence supporting the SVR with younger L2 readers, little is known about whether the model can explain differences in L2 reading for older L2 learners who first encounter the L2 several years after they learned to read (and speak) their L1, and who are learning to read the L2 at the same time they are learning to speak and comprehend the language. Few researchers have investigated how US students who begin the study of an L2 in secondary school learn to read the L2 and whether these students exhibit individual differences in the

skills important for L2 literacy. Although researchers have determined that word decoding and language comprehension skills, including vocabulary, can explain reading comprehension skills in younger L2 readers, no studies have investigated whether the relationships between word decoding and language comprehension might change with age or reading experience in older L2 learners. If the SVR model can explain differences in students' L2 reading skills several years after they have acquired literacy in their L1, then the model may be a viable way to explain differences in the reading skills of older L2 readers in shallow or deep L2 orthographies and also differences in L2 learners acquiring literacy skills at the same time they are learning to speak and comprehend the L2.

In the present study, four research questions were proposed to investigate the premises of the SVR model in relation to L2 reading skills with secondary L2 learners. First, will both L2 word decoding and L2 language comprehension make significant contributions to L2 reading comprehension? Second, will L2 word decoding and L2 language comprehension make independent contributions to L2 reading comprehension? Third, will other L2 skills, i.e., L2 reading fluency and L2 vocabulary, or number of years studying Spanish make significant contributions to L2 reading comprehension? Fourth, will secondary level L2 learners with above average, average, and below average levels of L2 reading comprehension exhibit significant differences in L2 word decoding, language comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and phonemic awareness.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

There were 165 participants in this study who attended four different parochial high schools in urban and suburban areas of a large metropolitan city in the United States. Two of the schools were coeducational and two were single-sex. All participants were completing either first-year ($n = 82$) or second-year ($n = 83$) Spanish courses. There were 91 males and 74 females whose mean age was 15 years, 11 months (13 years, 1 month to 18 years, 7 months). The students were enrolled in ninth ($n = 63$), tenth ($n = 62$), eleventh ($n = 18$), and twelfth ($n = 22$) grades. All participants except one, who also spoke Telegu, were monolingual. One student lived in a home where both parents also spoke Mandarin Chinese, and another lived in a home where both parents spoke Tagalog. All participants at the four schools received similar numbers of hours of Spanish instruction and were not routinely exposed to Spanish outside of school. All students enrolled in first year Spanish classes were invited to participate. Those for whom parental permission was obtained were included in the study.

3.2 Measures

There were seven measures of Spanish used in this study. Because there are no standardized measures of L2 achievement that have been designed specifically for US students to determine the level at which Spanish has been mastered, the authors used items from a standardized measure of Spanish achievement, the Woodcock-Muñoz Pruebas de aprovechamiento (Woodcock, Muñoz-Sandoval, McGrew, and Mather 2001, 2007), designed for students whose native language is Spanish. Five of the measures—Spanish word decoding, pseudoword decoding, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency—were subtests from this standardized test. Because the Woodcock-Muñoz does not have an alternate form, the Spanish listening comprehension measure used in this study was constructed in a manner similar to that of its reading comprehension measure (i.e., a cloze procedure) and items from the English version, the Woodcock-Johnson-III Tests of Achievement (Woodcock, McGrew, and Mather 2001, 2007), were used. The final measure, Spanish phonemic awareness, was an author-designed test. The testing measures are described here.

3.2.1 Spanish Reading Comprehension

The measure of Spanish reading comprehension was the Bateria III Woodcock-Muñoz Pruebas de aprovechamiento Comprensión de textos subtest. On the first four items of this subtest, a student read a phrase (e.g., *casa grande*) and pointed to one out of four pictures represented by the phrase. On the remaining items, the student read a short passage and identified a key missing word (i.e., a cloze procedure) that made sense in the context of the passage (e.g., *Luis y Rosa _____ amigos*). The correct missing word(s) was determined by the authors of the test. The items became increasingly difficult by removing picture stimuli and increasing passage length, level of vocabulary, and complexity of syntactic and semantic cues. Most items in this study consisted of one to two sentences. A reliability coefficient of .90 was reported for this subtest by the test's authors.

3.2.2 Spanish Word Decoding

The measure of Spanish word decoding was the Bateria III Woodcock-Muñoz Pruebas de aprovechamiento Identificación de letras y palabras (Word Identification) subtest. On this test, a student read aloud a list of increasingly difficult words. For a response to be considered correct, the student had to decode and pronounce the word correctly. A reliability coefficient of .95 was reported for this subtest by the test's authors.

3.2.3 Spanish Pseudoword Decoding

The measure of Spanish pseudoword decoding was the Bateria III Woodcock-Muñoz Pruebas de aprovechamiento Análisis de palabras (Word Attack) subtest. On this test, a student read aloud a list of increasingly difficult Spanish pseudowords. For a response to be considered correct, the student had to decode and pronounce the pseudoword correctly. A reliability coefficient of .91 was reported for this subtest by the test's authors.

3.2.4 Spanish Vocabulary

The measure of Spanish vocabulary was the Bateria III Woodcock-Muñoz Pruebas de aprovechamiento Vocabulario sobre dibujos (Vocabulary) subtest. This test measures an individual's speaking vocabulary in Spanish. On two of the items, the student is asked to point to one (out of four) pictures after the examiner says a vocabulary word, e.g., *la estufa*. On the remaining items, the student is asked to identify by name pictured objects with the correct Spanish vocabulary word. The items became increasingly difficult as the selected pictures appeared less frequently in the environment. A reliability coefficient of 0.89 was reported for this subtest by the test's authors.

3.2.5 Spanish Reading Fluency

The measure of reading fluency was the Bateria III Woodcock-Muñoz Pruebas de aprovechamiento Fluidez en la lectura (Fluency) subtest. On this test, a student is asked to read simple sentences (e.g., *Tú puedes comer una manzana*), decide if the statement is true or false, and circle yes or no. The word decoding demands of this task remain consistent throughout the subtest, that is, the words to be decoded did not increase in difficulty. Likewise, the comprehension demands of the subtest are designed so that each item can be understood by students as young as first grade. The student attempts to complete as many items as possible within a three-minute limit, but is told s/he will be penalized for incorrect responses. A reliability coefficient of 0.98 was reported for this subtest by the test's authors.

3.2.6 Spanish Phonemic Awareness

In order to measure phonemic awareness in Spanish, the participants were administered an author-designed pig latin test. In pig latin, the first consonant phoneme in a word is moved to the end of the word and then the /ã/ sound is affixed to the word. For this task, the participant was told the following: "I am going to say a word to you and I want you to change it into pig latin. To do this, you will need to do three things. First, you need to take the first sound off the front of the word. Then, you need to put that sound at the end of the word. Then, you need to add the /ã/ sound to the end of the word. For example, *mar* would be *arma*, and *clavo* would be *lavoca*. The directions were followed by three items for practice (*tu*, *seis*, *son*). The measure consisted of 20 items with the intent to include one, two, three, and (one) four-syllable words, (e.g., *dos*, *libro*, *cambio*, *teléfono*). The new word had to be pronounced correctly. The student reached a ceiling level if s/he missed six consecutive items. The list of words is provided in the Appendix. The reliability of the Spanish phonemic awareness measure was checked by calculating Cronbach's Alpha, which was 0.82.

3.2.7 Spanish Listening Comprehension

In order to measure Spanish listening comprehension, the first author developed a measure parallel to the Woodcock-Muñoz *Comprensión de textos* subtest, i.e., a cloze comprehension task, using the procedure described by Aaron (1989). Because the Woodcock-Munoz does not have alternate forms, the items from the Woodcock-Johnson-III Tests of Achievement, Passage Comprehension subtest, Form A, were translated into Spanish. The items were read by a high school Spanish teacher and then placed on an Ipod. Each student used headphones to listen to the items, which were presented one at a time. The student was not permitted to read (see) the passages, but a passage could be repeated twice. The types of items were similar to the Spanish reading comprehension measure, i.e., cloze procedure, one sentence, missing word decided by the Woodcock-Johnson's authors. For the first four items, a student listened to a short question (e.g., *¿Dónde está la foto de la mesa roja?*) and pointed to one (of four) picture that answered the question. On the remaining items, the student listened to a short sentence and filled in the blank with a key missing word that made sense in the context of the passage (e.g., *Había un conejo sentado en el _____*). The items became more difficult by removing pictures, increasing passage length, and increasing the complexity of syntactic and semantic clues, but all items were one sentence in length.

The rationale for using a cloze procedure for listening comprehension similar to the reading comprehension measure was provided by Aaron (1989), who suggested that 1) a measure of listening comprehension should not be contaminated by variables such as memory, attention, or motivation; and 2) measures of listening and reading comprehension should be equivalent in level of vocabulary difficulty, complexity of the sentences, and cohesiveness of the sentences (181). The reliability of the Spanish listening comprehension measure was checked by calculating Cronbach's Alpha, which was 0.64.

3.3 Procedure

All testing measures were administered in one session of 30–40 minutes. The testing was conducted by the first author and two assistants trained by him. One of the assistants was a high school Spanish teacher and the other was a graduate student who spoke Spanish. Both assistants were fluent Spanish speakers but not native speakers. The testing was completed over the last two months of the school year.

4. Data Analysis

In order to test the SVR model, two variables, decoding and language comprehension, were used to predict students' L2 reading comprehension skill. The decoding variable was comprised of the Spanish word decoding measure. The Spanish pseudoword decoding measure was not included as part of the Decoding variable because of its strong correlation (.87) with the Spanish word decoding measure. The second variable, language comprehension, was comprised of the Spanish listening comprehension measure. These two variables were used to predict reading comprehension on the Spanish reading comprehension measure. A multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the effect that Spanish word decoding and Spanish language comprehension would have on students' level of Spanish reading comprehension. Next, a multiple regression analysis was performed to determine if unique variance could be explained by the interaction between decoding and listening comprehension. Then, three additional regressions were conducted to determine whether Spanish reading fluency, Spanish vocabulary, or the number of years studying Spanish would explain unique variance in Spanish reading comprehension. These regressions were hierarchical in nature with decoding entered first and listening comprehension entered second.

To determine whether there would be differences among the participants in L2 reading skills, the students were divided into three groups based on their level of L2 reading comprehension. To determine their L2 reading comprehension level (independent variable), the 165 students were classified into three groups—high-achieving (HIGH), average-achieving (AVE), and low-achieving (LOW)—based on their scores on the *Batería III Woodcock-Muñoz Pruebas de aprovechamiento Comprensión de textos* subtest. The grouping procedure involved determining the extent to which a student's score deviated from the total group's mean score on the L2 reading comprehension subtest. All students' scores on the L2 reading comprehension test were transformed to *z* scores. Next, students scoring more than one standard deviation above the overall sample mean were identified as HIGH, i.e., above average range; those scoring between +0.99 and -0.99 standard deviations from the sample mean were identified as AVE (i.e., average range); and those scoring more than one standard deviation below the sample mean were identified as LOW (i.e., below average range). A multiple analysis of variance procedure (MANOVA) was used to determine whether there were overall differences among the HIGH, AVE, and LOW groups on the remaining six L2 measures (dependent variables). In the event a MANOVA analysis was significant, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the HIGH, AVE, and LOW groups on the aforementioned measures. The criterion for significance was a level of $p \leq .05$. To reduce the possibility of Type I error, Scheffé and Tukey-Kramer procedures were used in comparing individual group differences on each measure. Effect sizes, Cohen's *d* (1988), were calculated for all group comparisons on which there were significant differences.

5. Results

Table 1 presents simple statistics of the (raw) scores of the 165 participants on the testing measures. Raw scores are reported for all testing measures as there are no available norms that can be used to compare English-speaking students to each other on Spanish reading and listening comprehension measures. A correlation matrix showing the relationships among the testing measures is presented in Table 2.

The results of the regression analyses and the analysis of group differences are presented under the following two headings: "Examining the SVR model" and "Group differences in L2 reading skills."

Table 1. Means and standard deviations for total group on the L2 measures (n = 165)

Testing Measure	M	SD	Range	
			Min	Max
L2 Word Decoding ^a	32.8	15.1	8	66
L2 Pseudoword Decoding ^b	17.0	5.8	3	28
L2 Reading Fluency ^c	17.6	4.8	6	29
L2 Listening Comprehension ^d	6.0	2.2	2	12
L2 Speaking Vocabulary ^e	6.3	2.9	0	20
L2 Phonemic Awareness ^f	10.4	6.5	0	20

^aRaw Score, Maximum = 66^bRaw Score, Maximum = 30^cRaw Score, Maximum = 40^dRaw Score, Maximum = 25^eRaw Score, Maximum = 30^fRaw Score, Maximum = 20

Table 2. Intercorrelations among the testing measures

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Spanish Word Decoding		.87**	.50**	.39**	.59**	.64**	.44**
2. Spanish Pseudoword Decoding			.53**	.37**	.52**	.56**	.42**
3. Spanish Phoneme Awareness				.35**	.37**	.33**	.29**
4. Spanish Reading Fluency					.35**	.38**	.41**
5. Spanish Reading Comprehension						.81**	.68**
6. Spanish Listening Comprehension							.67**
7. Spanish Vocabulary							

**p ≤ .01

5.1 Examining the SVR Model

In the first regression analysis presented in Table 3, results showed that Spanish decoding ($\beta = .13$) explained 35.0% of the variance in Spanish reading comprehension, and Spanish language comprehension explained 31.3% of the variance in Spanish reading comprehension ($\beta = .72$), $F(2,162) = 159.08$, $p < .0001$. Together, the two variables explained 66.3% of the variance in Spanish reading comprehension.

In the second regression analysis examining the interaction effect between word decoding and language comprehension presented in Table 4, results showed that there was no interaction effect ($\beta = -.36$) between Spanish word decoding and Spanish language comprehension in predicting Spanish reading comprehension skill.

In the third regression analysis examining Spanish reading fluency presented in Table 5, results showed that reading fluency ($\beta = .03$) did not explain unique variance in Spanish reading comprehension.

In the fourth regression analysis examining Spanish vocabulary presented in Table 6, results showed that Spanish vocabulary ($\beta = .24$) explained an additional 3.3% of the variance in Spanish reading comprehension after the effects of Spanish word decoding and Spanish listening comprehension had been partialled. Together, the three variables explained almost 70% of the variance in Spanish reading comprehension.

In the fifth regression analysis examining the number of years studying Spanish, presented in Table 7, results showed the number of years of instruction (i.e., one or two years) ($\beta = .02$), did not explain unique variance in Spanish reading comprehension.

Table 3. Multiple regression results with Spanish word decoding and Spanish listening comprehension as predictors of Spanish reading comprehension

Variable	R	ΔR^2	ΔF	Final β	Final F
Spanish Word Decoding	.592	.350	87.74**	.126	4.54*
Spanish Listening Comprehension	.814	.313	150.14**	.727	150.14**

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis with interaction effect between Spanish word decoding and Spanish reading comprehension

Variable	R	ΔR^2	ΔF	Final β	Final F
Spanish Word Decoding	.592	.350	87.74**	.320	5.24*
Spanish Listening Comprehension	.814	.313	150.14**	.920	43.82**
Interaction	.817	.005	2.34	-.357	2.34

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

Table 5. Multiple regression results with Spanish word decoding, Spanish listening comprehension, and Spanish reading fluency as predictors of Spanish reading comprehension

Variable	R	ΔR^2	ΔF	Final β	Final F
Spanish Word Decoding	.592	.350	87.74**	.118	3.80*
Spanish Listening Comprehension	.814	.313	150.14**	.720	141.37**
Spanish Reading Fluency	.815	.0001	0.41	.032	0.41

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

Table 6. Multiple regression results with Spanish word decoding, Spanish listening comprehension, and Spanish vocabulary as predictors of Spanish reading comprehension

Variable	R	ΔR2	ΔF	Final β	Final F
Spanish Word Decoding	.592	.350	87.74**	.123	4.71*
Spanish Listening Comprehension	.814	.313	150.14**	.567	68.06**
Spanish Vocabulary	.834	.033	17.16**	.243	17.14**

*p < .05

**p < .01

Table 7. Multiple regression results with Spanish word decoding, Spanish listening comprehension, and years of Spanish instruction as predictors of Spanish reading comprehension

Variable	R	ΔR2	ΔF	Final β	Final F
Spanish Word Decoding	.592	.350	87.74**	.126	4.49*
Spanish Listening Comprehension	.814	.313	150.14**	.721	138.77**
Years of Spanish Instruction	.814	.0004	0.21	.022	0.21

*p < .05

**p < .01

5.2 Group Differences in L2 Reading Skills

Table 8 presents means and standard deviations for the three L2 reading comprehension groups on the six reading skill measures. Results of the MANOVA procedure showed that the groups exhibited overall significant differences on the six L2 measures, Wilks' Lambda = 0.473, F (12, 314) = 11.89, p < .0001. Individual ANOVAs showed significant between-group differences for the HIGH and LOW groups on all six testing measures favoring the HIGH group; for the HIGH and AVE groups on all testing measures favoring the HIGH group; and for the AVE and LOW groups on three of the six testing measures (except pseudoword decoding, reading fluency, phoneme awareness) favoring the AVE group. Table 9 presents between-group differences and effect sizes, which ranged from d = 0.62 to 2.83 for all between-group differences.

6. Discussion

The SVR model for L1 reading posits that reading comprehension is best explained as the product of word decoding and language comprehension, and that decoding and language comprehension make independent contributions to reading comprehension (Gough and Tunmer 1986; Hoover and Gough 1990). In this study, the SVR was examined to determine its relevance for explaining the L2 reading skills of US high school students learning to read Spanish several years after they had become literate in their L1 and at the same time they were learning to speak

Table 8. Means and standard deviations for the high, average, and low-achieving L2 readers on the L2 measures (*n* = 165)

Testing Measure	High-Achieving Readers (<i>n</i> = 37)		Average-Achieving Readers (<i>n</i> = 101)		Low-Achieving Readers (<i>n</i> = 27)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
L2 Word Decoding ^a	45.5	11.0	31.1	14.1	22.8	12.8
L2 Pseudoword Decoding ^b	21.2	3.9	16.3	5.5	14.0	4.7
L2 Reading Fluency ^c	20.1	4.1	17.3	4.8	15.8	4.3
L2 Listening Comprehension ^d	8.5	1.9	5.7	1.6	3.9	1.3
L2 Speaking Vocabulary ^e	8.9	2.8	6.2	2.4	3.6	2.0
L2 Phoneme Awareness ^f	14.5	5.0	9.6	6.4	7.8	6.7

^aRaw Score, Maximum = 66
^bRaw Score, Maximum = 30
^cRaw Score, Maximum = 40
^dRaw Score, Maximum = 25
^eRaw Score, Maximum = 30
^fRaw Score, Maximum = 20

Table 9. Overall group differences, between-group differences using Scheffé and Tukey’s corrections, and effect sizes for high, average, and low-achieving groups on L2 measures^a

Testing Measure	High-Achieving vs Low-Achieving	High-Achieving vs Average-Achieving	Average-Achieving vs Low-Achieving	<i>p</i>
L2 Word Decoding	**** (1.90)	**** (1.14)	** (0.62)	<.0001
L2 Pseudoword Decoding	**** (1.64)	**** (1.01)	—	<.0001
L2 Reading Fluency	** (1.02)	* (0.63)	—	<.001
L2 Listening Comprehension	**** (2.83)	**** (1.59)	**** (1.24)	<.0001
L2 Speaking Vocabulary	**** (2.18)	**** (1.04)	**** (1.18)	<.0001
L2 Phoneme Awareness	*** (1.33)	*** (0.86)	—	<.0001

^aEffect sizes listed in parentheses. Cohen (1988) proposed the following for interpreting effect sizes: a small effect size is .20, a medium effect size is .50, and a large effect size is .80.
**p* < .05
***p* < .01
****p* < .001
*****p* < .0001

and comprehend the L2. Recent studies by L2 reading researchers have found the SVR to be a viable model for explaining the acquisition of L2 reading skills in young ELLs. However, the model has not yet been examined to determine its relevance for explaining the L2 reading skills of older L2 learners. The results are discussed under separate headings, “Examining the SVR model” and “Group differences in L2 reading skills.”

6.1 Examining the SVR Model

Results of the hierarchical regression analysis supported the main premise of the SVR model, that is, both Spanish word decoding (35.0%) and Spanish language comprehension (31.3%) would make significant contributions to Spanish reading comprehension skill. Together, word decoding and language comprehension explained 66.3% of the variance in Spanish reading comprehension. In previous studies with younger ELLs (e.g., Gottardo and Mueller 2009) and with younger students learning languages other than English (e.g., Droop and Verhoeven 2003), researchers have found that both L2 word decoding and L2 language comprehension make significant contributions to L2 reading comprehension. The results from the present study suggest that both L2 word decoding and L2 language comprehension can explain a large part of the variance in US students' L2 reading comprehension skill, even several years after they become literate in their L1 and while they are learning to speak and comprehend the L2.

The SVR model also predicts that word decoding and listening comprehension make independent contributions to reading comprehension. Strong support for this contention has been found in L1 reading research (see Aouad and Savage 2009). Likewise, in studies with younger L2 learners, L2 researchers have found that word decoding and language comprehension make independent contributions to reading comprehension (e.g., Mancilla-Martínez and Lesaux 2010; Proctor, Carlo, August, and Snow 2005). Like the aforementioned studies with younger L2 learners, findings from the present study showed that L2 word decoding and L2 language comprehension made independent contributions to L2 reading comprehension skills; that is, regardless of a student's level of L2 word decoding skill, his/her L2 language comprehension skill was unchanged, and vice versa. These findings suggest that even for older L2 learners, L2 word decoding and L2 language comprehension make both significant and independent contributions to L2 reading comprehension.

Reading research in L2 has found that smaller L2 vocabularies impede acquisition of L2 reading comprehension (e.g., Droop and Verhoeven 2003; Lervåg and Aukrust 2010). In one study, Proctor et al. (2005) found that L2 listening comprehension made an independent, proximal contribution to L2 reading comprehension, but L2 vocabulary had both proximal and distant relationships with L2 reading comprehension. Nonetheless, wide variation has been found in the quality and quantity of L2 vocabulary in L2 readers. In the present study, when the Spanish vocabulary measure was included as a separate predictor variable, results showed that Spanish vocabulary added significant unique variance to the prediction of Spanish reading comprehension after the variance explained by decoding and language comprehension had been partialled. This finding is important because one's level of vocabulary is an important part of language comprehension. Nonetheless, vocabulary still added unique variance to the prediction of reading comprehension. This finding suggests that students' level of Spanish vocabulary was an important factor in their level of Spanish reading comprehension, particularly since they were learning to read Spanish as they were building their knowledge of the target language. To our knowledge, there is little research with US high school students demonstrating the developmental implications of L2 vocabulary learning for L2 reading comprehension. In one study with sixth graders, Lesaux and Kieffer (2010) found that although language minority learners classified as struggling readers had achieved fluency skills similar to struggling readers who were English-speaking, both groups were characterized by low vocabulary knowledge. Research with older L2 learners has shown that the context of L2 acquisition, i.e., formal classroom instruction or naturalistic settings, has a strong influence on the effects of age of L2 learning in relation to ultimate L2 attainment (Muñoz 2007). Likewise, Nation (2001) has noted that while native speakers have multiple opportunities to learn and use vocabulary, foreign language learners, even in language courses, have minimal opportunities and much less time to acquire vocabulary. The results of this study support previous L2 reading research demonstrating the importance of vocabulary knowledge for L2 learning.

In several studies, both L1 and L2 reading researchers have found that the power of word decoding to predict reading comprehension decreases over time, while the predictive power of language comprehension and vocabulary in predicting reading comprehension increases in the later grades (e.g., Francis, Fletcher, Catts, and Tomblin 2005; Verhoeven and van Leeuwe 2012). For example, in English readers García and Cain (2014) found that language comprehension moderated the relationship between word decoding and reading comprehension. However, the findings from the present study showed that the number of years studying Spanish did not explain significant unique variance in L2 reading comprehension. Likewise, reading fluency (speed) did not explain unique variance in comprehension. Here again, these findings may not be unexpected given the cultural context in which the target language was studied (e.g., generally monolingual US culture offers little opportunity outside the classroom to practice the language). Determining the roles played by L2 word decoding, language comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency in predicting L2 reading comprehension for older L2 learners will likely require that longitudinal investigations be conducted over several years, not just one to two years.

6.2 Group Differences in L2 Reading Skills

The SVR model posits that readers with average to above average reading skill possess both adequate word decoding and language comprehension skills to support reading comprehension, while below average readers have weak decoding and weak language comprehension. To determine whether this premise would apply to older L2 readers, the participants were divided into HIGH (above average), AVE (average), and LOW (below average) groups based on their Spanish reading comprehension scores and compared on the remaining reading-related measures. The findings showed that the three groups exhibited significant overall differences on the six Spanish reading measures with significant between-group differences. Students in the HIGH group could decode more (and more difficult) Spanish words and pseudowords and had significantly stronger Spanish language comprehension, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and reading fluency than students in the AVE and LOW groups (Table 8). There were large differences between the HIGH and LOW groups on all six L2 testing measures (effect sizes from 1.02–2.83) (Table 9). There were also significant differences between the HIGH and AVE groups (effect sizes from 0.63–1.59) on all measures, and between the AVE and LOW groups on three of the six measures (effect sizes from 0.62–1.24). The findings support studies which have shown that L2 learners with stronger L2 reading comprehension have more efficient L2 word decoding skills (e.g., Nassaji and Geva 1999; Sparks 2012; van Gelderen et al. 2004) and stronger L2 language comprehension and L2 vocabulary (e.g., see Droop and Verhoeven 2003; Proctor et al. 2005; Verhoeven and van Leeuwe 2012). The results support the premise of the SVR model, which posits that both word decoding and language comprehension skills are necessary for efficient reading comprehension.

The findings leave open the question of other skills that may be predictive of L2 reading comprehension for older learners in a classroom context. The differences between Spanish, a more shallow alphabetic orthography, and English, a deep alphabetic orthography, could play a role in how quickly and efficiently older L2 students who have been reading English orthography for several years learn a different orthography, even one that is as transparent as Spanish. Perfetti (2011) noted that for skilled readers, knowledge of orthographic representations takes on an important role. In addition to vocabulary knowledge in the target L2, van Gelderen et al. (2004) have found that metalinguistic awareness, i.e., ability to analyze and manipulate language, plays an important role in the prediction of L2 reading comprehension. In their studies, they used measures of linguistic knowledge (vocabulary, grammar) and metacognitive knowledge (questions relevant to reading and text characteristics). They found that metalinguistic awareness had a substantial impact on L2 reading comprehension and speculated that metacognitive awareness

of language might be considered as a “separate component” that contributes to both L1 and L2 reading development (487).

In sum, results of the present study suggest that the SVR model can explain the L2 reading skills of older students learning to read an L2 at the same time they are learning to speak and understand the L2. Spanish word decoding and Spanish language comprehension made significant and independent contributions to Spanish reading comprehension, and Spanish vocabulary explained additional unique variance. The findings are consistent with those obtained by L2 reading researchers with young ELLs, who have found that word decoding, language comprehension, and vocabulary in the target language are important for L2 reading comprehension.

7. Conclusions and Implications

The present study is unique because participants were US high school students who had mastered their written (and oral) L1 several years before engaging in the study of Spanish and were learning to read Spanish at the same time they were learning to speak and comprehend the language. Nonetheless, the study has limitations that restrict generalization of the findings. All the participants attended parochial schools. The participants were not chosen randomly, but were invited to participate because they were enrolled in Spanish classes. In addition, the authors used assessments of Spanish word decoding, pseudoword decoding, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency designed for students whose native language is Spanish. Author-designed tests were used to assess Spanish language comprehension and Spanish phonemic awareness, and their reliability coefficients were not as strong as those for the standardized tests used to measure other Spanish reading skills.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, there are several ways in which this study contributes to the L2 reading literature. First, the findings provide empirical support for the SVR model and suggest that the model may be applicable to older, secondary level students in the US context learning to read an L2 several years after mastering their oral and written L1. Second, the findings suggest that the SVR model can explain differences in reading-related skills between L1 readers of a deep orthography who are learning to read a shallow L2 orthography. Third, in addition to oral language comprehension, vocabulary in the target language is an important component of L2 reading comprehension. Fourth, like young L1 readers, older students studying an L2 for the first time also exhibit large differences in most reading skills, including word decoding and comprehension. Fifth, because older students learning to read an L2 exhibit differences in word decoding and language comprehension, L2 classroom teachers should be aware that some students may have difficulty primarily with word decoding, others may have difficulty primarily with language comprehension, and others may have difficulty with both word decoding and language comprehension. Like their counterparts who teach reading to young students in both L1 and L2, high school L2 teachers may find it beneficial to focus on teaching a specific skill (word decoding *or* language comprehension) or both skills (word decoding *and* language comprehension) to help their students learn to read and comprehend the L2. Sixth, because US students who enroll in L2 classes constitute a unique population for several reasons, additional research of a longitudinal nature that explicitly investigates how older students learn to read an L2 and their ultimate attainment in L2 reading would be helpful for L2 classroom teachers.

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APPENDIX

Items on Spanish Pig Latin Measure

dos	frenar
sin	glasé
res	cambio
cien	catorce
vena	caballo
zarpa	nosotros
libro	clavija
pesar	problema
chato	trancazo
blanco	teléfono

Syntactic Reflexes of Emerging Optionality in Spanish as a Heritage Language: The Case of Dative-experiencer Verbs



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Abstract: This study contributes to current trends of heritage speaker bilingualism research by examining the syntax of so-called Spanish dative-experiencer predicates (*gustar*-like verbs). Building on previous findings (e.g., Silva-Corvalán 1994; Toribio and Nye 2006), it is hypothesized that Spanish heritage speakers can project an optional agentive syntax (a use deemed ungrammatical by monolingual speakers) while still having access to the obligatory dative-experiencer syntax. It is argued that the availability of this emergent optionality, coupled with influence from English, the dominant language, conspire to promote the non target-like forms documented in previous research (e.g., Toribio and Nye 2006; de Prada Pérez and Pascual y Cabo 2011). The ensuing predictions are tested with a grammaticality judgment task that examines the informants' knowledge and use of *gustar*-like verbs in passive constructions precisely because passivization of stative predicates should be precluded from a grammar that does not allow for an agentive alternation.

Keywords: acquisition/adquisición, bilingualism/bilingüismo, psychological verbs/verbos psicológicos, Spanish as a heritage language/español como lengua de herencia, Spanish in the United States/español en los Estados Unidos

1. Introduction

Bilingual contexts often create conditions that give rise to linguistic outcomes that differ from those expected of monolingual speakers of the same language(s) (usually the minority language, but perhaps in both). These distinctive outcomes, which are generally argued to obtain as a result of some sort of incomplete acquisition (e.g., Montrul 2008; Silva-Corvalán 1994, 2014), are characteristic of the grammars of heritage speakers (HS). Briefly defined, a HS is a bilingual individual who was exposed naturalistically to a language at home that is different from the greater societal majority language (e.g., Beaudrie and Fairclough 2012; Bennamoun, Montrul, and Polinsky 2013; Montrul 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012; Rothman 2007, 2009; Valdés 2000). The heritage language (HL) is most often the sole first language (L1) (or a simultaneous L1 along with the societal language), but with time the societal majority language usually becomes the HS's dominant linguistic system, relegating the HL to more restricted domains of use. Shifts in dominance and in language use preferences typically take place in early childhood, roughly around the age the child is introduced to schooling, and before ultimate attainment in all domains of the HL grammar occurs.

As noted by the growing body of HL acquisition studies, HS bilingual competence generally differs from that of their monolingual counterparts' across properties and across languages in ways not always predictable and/or well understood (e.g., Benmamoun, Montrul, and Polinsky 2013; Laleko 2010; Mikhaylova 2012; Montrul 2008; Pascual y Cabo and Rothman 2012; Pires and Rothman 2009; Polinsky 2006, 2008, 2011; Rothman 2007, 2009; Sok-Ju Kim 2012). This observation also applies to Spanish as a heritage language, as reported in studies examining a variety of properties and domains such as differential object marking (e.g., Bowles and Montrul, 2009),

copula choice (e.g., Silva-Corvalán 1994; Valenzuela, Barski, Diez, Faure, Ramírez, and Pangtay 2012; Valezuela, Iverson, Rothman, Borg, Pascual y Cabo, and Pinto 2015), tense and aspect (e.g., Miller and Cuza 2013; Montrul, 2002, 2009), subject and object expression (e.g., Montrul 2004; Silva-Corvalán 1994), gender agreement (e.g., Montrul, Foote, and Perpiñan 2008), mood (e.g., Montrul 2009; Lynch 1999; Pascual y Cabo, Lingwall, and Rothman 2012), pragmatics/discourse (e.g., Pinto 2012; Pinto and Raschio 2007) and its interface with syntax (e.g., Cuza and Frank, 2011; De Prada Pérez, and Pascual y Cabo 2012; Pascual y Cabo, Lingwall, and Rothman 2012;), or phonetics and phonology (e.g., Henriksen 2015; Rao 2014; Ronquest 2012).

The present study contributes to this line of research by examining the syntax of Spanish dative experiencer verbs, also known as reverse psychological predicates (i.e., *gustar*-like), a property that has been documented to be particularly vulnerable in HS grammars given its structural and semantic opacity (e.g., De Prada Pérez and Pascual y Cabo 2011; Silva-Corvalán 1994; Toribio and Nye 2006). Informed by syntactic theory (e.g., Belletti and Rizzi 1988; Landau 2010; Pesetsky 1995), the hypothesis of the present study is that in heritage-speaker Spanish, this group of verbs has undergone a reanalysis of its argument structure. As a direct consequence of this adjustment, and alongside its obligatory dative-experiencer syntax, Spanish HSs can use and interpret *gustar*-like verbs with an (optional) agentive syntax, a use deemed ungrammatical by monolingual speakers due to its unaccusative nature. The predictions that fall out from this hypothesis are tested with a grammaticality judgment task that examines *gustar*-like verbs in passive constructions precisely because passivization of unaccusative predicates should be precluded from a grammar that does not allow for an agentive alternation. A total of 49 HSs and 16 Spanish monolingual speakers completed this task. The analysis of the data obtained reveal that, although HSs show full-fledged knowledge of the semantic and syntactic restrictions of the passive voice, they tend to favor the proposed innovation, a use that is categorically rejected by the control group.

Given this background, in the next section, I present the syntax of reverse psychological predicates.

2. The Syntax of Psychological Verbs

Psych-predicates are those whose lexical-semantics denote a mental or emotional state. These verbs subcategorize for two internal roles: an experiencer (i.e., the entity that receives or contains the mental/emotional state) and a theme (i.e., the entity that triggers the mental/emotional state). Belletti and Rizzi (1988) proposed a three-class distinction of psych-predicates for Italian, also pertinent to Spanish (see Parodi-Lewin 1991), described as follows.

Class I psych-verbs are generally treated as transitive verbs with a subject experiencer in nominative case and a theme in accusative case (as in 1). Some Spanish verbs that belong to this class are *temer* 'to fear' or *odiar* 'to hate.'

- (1) *Teo odia la lechuga*
 Teo.NOM hate.3.SG.PRES the lettuce.ACC
 'Teo hates lettuce'

Class II psych-verbs generally contain a theme with nominative case that controls verbal agreement and a postverbal accusative experiencer. Some Spanish verbs that belong to this class are *molestar* 'to bother' or *asustar* 'to scare.' Consider example (2):

- (2) *Pau molesta a Jake*
 Pau.NOM bother.3.SG.PRES to Jake
 'Pau bothers Jake'

It has been noted that class II psych-predicates are hybrid in nature since they can be interpreted as either stative or eventive verbs (e.g., Arad 1998; Landau 2010; Pesetsky 1995). In other words, class II psych-verbs such as *asustar* 'to frighten' or *molestar* 'to bother' can be used to describe the outcome of an action in which the structural subject can have either an agentive, as in (3a), or a non-agentive role, as in (3b).

- (3) a. *Diana asustó a Whitman* (intentionally/unintentionally)
 Diana.NOM scare. 3SG. PRES. to. Whitman.ACC.
 'Diana scared Whitman'
 b. *A Whitman le asustan las tormentas*
 To Whitman.DAT him (DAT.CLI) scare. 3PL. PRES. storms
 'Whitman is scared of storms'

Note that although (3a) can have two interpretations, they are undistinguishable morphologically. In its agentive reading, (3a) corresponds to 'Diana intentionally caused Whitman (to) fear' and, as can be seen in (4) below, can be passivized, showing that indeed it is clearly not stative with this specific meaning.

- (4) *Whitman es asustado por Diana*
 'Whitman is scared by Diana'

On the other hand, if a class II psych-predicate is taken to have a stative interpretation, then it is treated as an unaccusative verb¹ and, obviously, it could not be used agentively. When that is the case, stative-unaccusative class II psych-predicates align syntactically with class III psych-verbs.

Class III psych-predicates subcategorize for a postverbal theme that controls verb agreement and a preverbal dative experiencer that is 1) obligatorily doubled by a clitic and 2) preceded by the dative marker *a* (as in examples 5a and 5b) when the experiencer is spelled out. This reversed, yet preferred word order (e.g., Gutiérrez-Bravo 2007), however, can vary for discourse-pragmatic reasons (Franco and Huidobro 2003; Gómez Soler 2012) (as in examples 5b and 5d).

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(5) a. <i>A Pau le gusta el pan.</i>
 To Pau him (DAT.CLI) like the bread.
 'Pau likes bread'</p> <p>c. <i>Le gusta el pan.</i>
 Him (DAT.CLI) likes the bread.
 'He likes bread'</p> | <p>b. <i>El pan le gusta a Pau.</i>
 The bread him (DAT.CLI) like to Pau.
 'Pau likes bread'</p> <p>d. <i>El pan le gusta.</i>
 The bread him (DAT.CLI) likes.
 'He likes bread'</p> |
|--|--|

Unlike class II psych-verbs, which can alternate between having both agentive and stative syntactic representations, class III psych-verbs only have an unaccusative syntax available. In other words, they cannot be used agentively, do not project *vP*, and are incompatible with passive constructions (6a and 6b). This difference will prove crucial to the syntactic proposal I will make for the representation of *gustar*-like verbs in heritage speaker Spanish.

- (6) a. **La película fue gustada por Marta*
 'The movie was liked by Marta'
 b. *Laurie fue asustada por Doug*
 'Laurie was frightened by Doug'

Unlike Spanish, English does not have dative experiencers that could be mistaken for subjects (White, Brown, Bruhn-Garavito, Chen, Hirakawa, and Montrul 1999: 173) and its verbal argument structure cannot be reversed. That is, the theta-roles are always mapped onto canonical Subject-Verb-Object word order and verbal agreement is necessarily controlled by the preverbal argument. As can be seen in (7), any deviation to the SVO order results in an ungrammatical sentence.

- (7) a. Nico likes dogs
 c. They like chocolate
 b. *Nico like dogs
 d. *They likes chocolate

Additionally, as can be seen in (8a–b), English does allow passive constructions with the verb ‘like,’ the equivalent version of Spanish ‘gustar.’

- (8) a. Everyone likes cupcakes
 b. Cupcakes are liked by everyone

Given this theoretical background, in the next section, I present the most important findings related to the acquisition of class III psych-verbs among Spanish heritage speakers.

3. Acquisitional Studies

Previous work examining knowledge and use of *gustar*-like predicates among Spanish HSs has convincingly shown that this is a particularly challenging property to acquire. The general consensus is that, although Spanish HSs can and do have access to target-like forms (Dvorak and Kirschner 1982; Pascual y Cabo 2013; Toribio and Nye 2006), they have a strong tendency to produce (Dvorak and Kirschner 1982; Silva-Corvalán 1994) and accept (de Prada Perez and Pascual y Cabo 2011; Toribio and Nye 2006) what *a priori* can be considered target-divergent forms.² For example, Dvorak and Kirschner (1982) tested Puerto Rican HSs in New York City via an English-to-Spanish translation task. Their data revealed patterns of omission of the dative marker *a* in obligatory environments (though the clitic *le* remained unaltered) as well as a strong preference towards preverbal experiencer control verbal agreement. Toribio and Nye (2006) examined production and comprehension of psych-verb constructions via an elicited written production task and a scalar grammaticality judgment task. In addition to finding strong evidence in support of Dvorak and Kirschner’s (1982) so-called invariable *le*, their results revealed 1) indeterminacy with respect to the mapping of the arguments to syntactic positions;³ 2) omission of the dative *a*-marker; and 3) that animate DPs are possibly taken to be the structural subject irrespective of actual grammatical function.

In a related study, Montrul and Bowles (2009) tested knowledge and use of the Differential Object Marker *a* (DOM) among US Spanish HSs and reported a generalized lack of instantiation of such inherent case in the HSs’ grammars (trends also observed more recently by Montrul and Sánchez Walker 2013). This finding led them to survey other instances of inherent dative case, which indicated that problems with DOM seem to extend to dative experiencers in class III psych-verbs. More recently, De Prada Pérez and Pascual y Cabo (2011) used a scalar grammaticality judgment task to examine basic subject-verb agreement and clitic agreement with two high frequency class III psych-predicates (*gustar* ‘to like’ and *encantar* ‘to love’). Their findings revealed four important tendencies. First, HS participants demonstrated robust knowledge of clitic agreement (contrary to Dvorak and Kirshchner 1982; Toribio and Nye 2006). Second, HSs revealed a strong preference for the use of the third person singular verb form regardless of actual subject-verb agreement. Third, no differences were found between the two class III

psych-verbs tested. Fourth, and perhaps most interestingly, these preferences were comparable to the group of Spanish native speakers tested.

In general, the previous studies reviewed here indicate that HSs tend to use strategies towards a more transparent mapping of class III psych-verbs. These results are, however, of no surprise since class III psych-verbs constitute an important learnability problem for the learner since it is necessary to acquire the associated non-canonical mapping of thematic roles to syntactic positions.

To provide an adequate explanatory analysis of the nature of the HS differences observed in this particular domain, the present study further examines the argument structure and semantic mappings of class III psych-predicates among Spanish heritage speakers in the United States. Since such differences are well documented already, I seek to go beyond further documentation of the differences alone, by offering from the outset a hypothesis based on the syntax of class II/III psych-verbs (e.g., Belletti and Rizzi, 1988; Landau, 2010; Pesetsky, 1995). I predict that in HS Spanish, class III type psych-verbs (e.g., *gustar* 'to like'), those that only have a stative reading available in monolingual grammars, are being reanalyzed as class II type psych-verbs (e.g., *asustar* 'to frighten'), which have both a stative and an agentive syntax available. This syntactic readjustment predicts that Spanish HSs should (variably) accept class III type verbs (e.g., *gustar* 'to like') used in all contexts and forms that are available for class II psych-verbs (e.g., *asustar* 'to frighten'), even if these uses are ungrammatical in monolingual grammars. For example, such modification would allow Spanish HSs to produce *gustar* taking a nominative experiencer as the structural subject (e.g., **ella gusta el queso* 'she likes cheese'), a finding that has consistently been reported in previous studies (De Prada Pérez and Pascual y Cabo 2011; Silva Corvalán 1994; Toribio and Nye 2006). Furthermore, if I am on the right track, one would expect to also find HSs' acceptance of *gustar*-like verbs used in the passive voice since this should be a valid option in their grammars as a byproduct of the new/optional agentive interpretation. Recall from section 2 that this sort of construction is not allowed in monolingual grammars because class III psych-verbs (e.g., *gustar* 'to like') do not have an agentive syntactic structure available and therefore cannot be passivized. Class II type verbs, however, do have an agentive syntactic structure available (even in monolingual environments) which allows them to be passivized. Before I provide details of the experimental design in section 5, I next present the research question that guides the present study. To conclude, section 6 includes a detailed discussion of the data obtained.

4. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research question at the core of the present study is the following: are class III psych-verbs (e.g., *gustar* 'to like') undergoing a reanalysis of their argument structure whereby they are adopting the hybrid nature of class II psych-verbs (e.g., *asustar* 'to frighten')?

Building on previous findings (Dvorak and Kirshchner 1982; Toribio and Nye 2006), it is hypothesized that Spanish HSs will show differences from monolingual norms for class III psych-verbs and the properties associated with them. To test this hypothesis, I designed a grammaticality judgment task that examined the abovementioned argument structure innovation. The specifics of the experimental methodology employed herein as well as the informants that participated in this study are detailed in the following sections.

5. Methodology

5.1 Participants

Participants' information was collected via a linguistic background questionnaire that, among other things, included questions regarding language use, exposure to the heritage

language, language instruction, and perceived language proficiency. A total of 65 informants, 16 Spanish monolingual speakers and 49 adult HSs, participated in this study.

Ranging in age from 18 to 24 years old (average 20;1), all adult HSs were either US-born or had arrived in the United States before the age of two. Their average age of first exposure to English was 0;2 for the HS intermediate group and 0;7 for the HS advanced group. To be included in this study, all HS informants were required to be of Cuban origin and to speak Spanish on a daily basis (although it need not be their dominant language). This group was divided into advanced (n = 21), intermediate (n = 24), and low (n = 4) proficiency subgroups according to their responses to an adapted version of the DELE, a commonly used Spanish proficiency test (e.g., Cuza and Frank 2011; Montrul 2000, 2002, 2009; White, Valenzuela, Kozłowska-MacGregor, and Leung 2004). This test consists of two main sections. The first one includes a 30-item multiple-choice section that targets lexical proficiency and grammatical competency. In the second section, informants select the most appropriate answers to a contextualized cloze test (n = 20). Given the small number of low proficiency informants based on the DELE (n = 4), the results from this HS group are not included herein.

All monolingual speakers reported having been born and raised in Cuba by Cuban parents and having very limited knowledge of a foreign language.⁴ In terms of education, 9 reported having completed secondary education, and 7 reported having completed (or were in the process of completing) post-secondary education. A summary of informants' background data is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Background information by group

Group	N (Male/ Female)	Age (years)	AoA English (years)	Self-rating English (Max. = 10)	Self-rating Spanish (Max. = 10)	DELE score (Max. = 50)
Advanced HSs	21 (6/15)	20;1 (1;6)	0;7 (0;69)	9.2 (.78)	6.1 (1.38)	41.5 (1.64)
Intermediate HSs	24 (8/16)	20;3 (1;6)	0;2 (0;55)	9.6 (.56)	4.9 (1.66)	32.6 (1.66)
Monolingual group	16 (4/12)	37;1 (19;2)	—	1.87 (1.78)	9.81 (.54)	46.9 (2.04)

5.2 Scalar Grammaticality Judgment Task

All participants were trained on and then asked to use a 1 (completely unnatural) to 4 (completely natural) Likert scale to rate a total of 40 sentences (available as an appendix at the end of this paper). Additionally, they also had the option to choose 0 if they were not completely sure, did not know the answer, or did not hear the sentence properly.⁵

To ensure consistency across testing sessions (e.g., controlling prosody), as well as to avoid any potential literacy effects (differentially applicable for HSs), all subjects were asked to provide their judgments as they heard the tokens from a recorded video of one male speaker born and raised in Cuba who, at the time of the recording, was 32 years old. The video lasted 8 minutes 16 seconds; the first minute provided instructions in Spanish and 3 practice items. The remaining 7 minutes included a total of 40 sentences. Between one sentence and the next, there was an 8 second pause. Prior to the beginning of the test, all informants received sufficient training and feedback.

Of the 40 sentences included in this experiment, half were baseline items and the other half served as critical items. All items were randomized and counterbalanced. The 20 baseline items were divided into three different groups: 10 items tested acceptance of grammatical sentences

(as in 9); 5 items tested ungrammatical sentences due to noun-adjective agreement (as in 10); and 5 items tested ungrammatical sentences due to subject-verb agreement (as in 11).

- (9) *Nosotros vivimos en un apartamento*
'We live in an apartment'

- (10) **El carro blanca fue caro*
'The white.FEM. car. MASC. was expensive'

- (11) **Ella hago la tarea todos los días*
'She does.1st SG. Homework every day'

In light of the hypothesis put forth in section 4, the critical items tested the informants' acceptance/rejection with respect to four types of passive structures: passive sentences with transitive verbs (as in 12); passive sentences with unaccusative verbs (as in 13); passive sentences with class III psych-verbs (as in 14); and passive sentences with class III psych-verbs (as in 15).

- (12) Transitive verb sample token
Esa carta fue escrita por Carol
'That letter was written by Carol'

- (13) Unaccusative verb sample token
**Hugo fue llegado a la casa*
'Hugo was arrived home'

- (14) Class II psych-verb simple token
Pau fue asustado por Jorge
'Pau was scared by Jorge'

- (15) Class III psych-verb sample token
(*)*La película fue gustada por Fernando*
'The movie was liked by Fernando'

In order to confirm the hypothesis, HSs' judgments should converge with those of the control groups in the case of (12) and (14), since agentive verbs can appear in both active and passive voice constructions, and (13), since both Spanish and English do not allow passivization with unaccusatives. Conversely, I expected HSs to variably accept *gustar*-like verbs in passive constructions (15) as a reflex of the new available agentive interpretation.

5.3 Results

Regarding the baseline items, which I present first to show that all participants were able to handle the task itself, a three (type: grammatical, *verb agreement, *adjective agreement) by three (group: advanced HSs, intermediate HSs, control group) repeated measures ANOVA revealed a main effect for type ($F(2, 96) = 716.47, p < .001$), group ($F(3, 46) = 4.277, p < .001$) and a type-by-group interaction ($F(6, 96) = 9.521, p < .001$). The significant effect for type was expected because grammatical tokens should yield significantly higher ratings than the ungrammatical ones. Figure 1 displays the average ratings for each of the baseline conditions for each group which from left to right are: 1) *noun-adjective agreement; (2) *subject-verb agreement; and 3) grammatical.

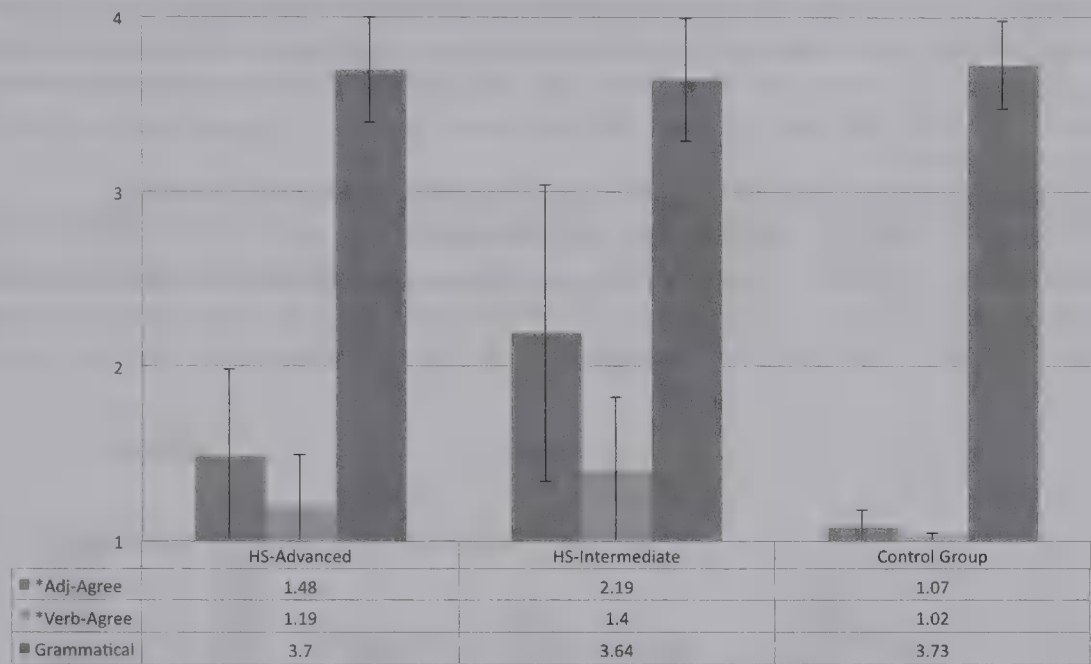


Figure 1. Group means of baseline conditions by group

As can be seen, the significant difference discussed above stems from the contrast that exists between an almost categorical acceptance of grammatical sentences and the tendency to reject ungrammatical ones. Results from Bonferroni pairwise comparisons revealed that all three baseline conditions (including the two ungrammatical ones) differ at a level of statistical significance: *adj-agree vs. *verb-agree, $p < .001$; *adj-agree vs. grammatical, $p < .001$; *verb-agree vs. grammatical, $p < .001$.

Although such a general trend is also visible among intermediate HSs, this group stands out from the other two in that the ungrammatical sentences receive higher ratings (2.19 in the case of *adj-agree and 1.4 in the case of *verb-agree), while the grammatical sentences are judged lower (3.64). The results from Bonferroni post hoc tests indicate that within this group, these differences are indeed statistically significant (i.e., *adj-agree vs. *verb-agree, $p < .001$; *adj-agree vs. grammatical, $p < .001$; *verb-agree vs. grammatical, $p < .001$). These results, I argue, should not be taken as a sign for target-divergent performance for this group, since they do make a significant distinction between grammatical and ungrammatical tokens. Instead, they reveal some indeterminacy, which may possibly result from the differential salient nature of the ungrammatical tokens themselves. That is, while problems with noun-adjective agreement in Spanish usually correspond to the absence or presence of a low perceptual salient form (e.g., a mere vowel alternation in the case of gender [i.e., most typically ‘o’ for masculine and ‘a’ for feminine]), problems with subject-verb agreement in Spanish tend to be more acoustically salient. Similar morpho-phonological issues pertaining to variable HS performance have been discussed in previous studies examining modality alternations (e.g., Montrul 2009; Pascual y Cabo, Rothman, and Lingwall 2012), gender agreement (e.g., Montrul, Foote, and Perpiñan 2008) and differential object marking (e.g., Montrul and Bowles 2010) among comparable Spanish HS groups in the United States. Moreover, the testing modality employed in this study would certainly lend support to this explanation since less salient forms tend to be easily concealed in oral speech.

Up to this point, I have shown that the informants' responses to the baseline items were generally on target, though somewhat indeterminate in the case of the intermediate HS group. That said, all groups were successful at making the necessary distinctions between grammatical and ungrammatical utterances. This distinction is taken as evidence that all groups were able to handle the task itself and that both the experiment and the procedure were valid for the purposes of this study.

Next, I proceed to discuss the results for the critical conditions. Figure 2 shows the overall group means and standard deviations for the four critical conditions tested in this experiment, which from left to right are 1) passives with transitive verbs; 2) passives with unaccusative verbs; 3) passives with class III psych-verbs; and 4) passives with class II psych-verbs.⁶ Recall from section 2 that all of these conditions, except for 2) and 3), are grammatical in the passive voice.

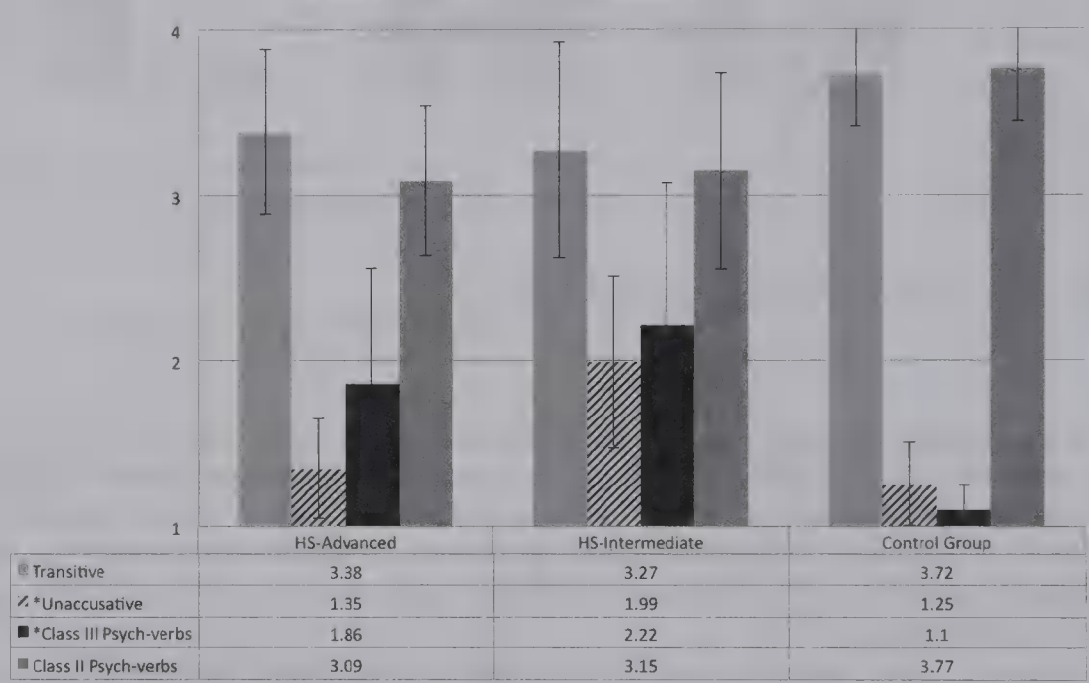


Figure 2. Group means of critical conditions by group

As expected, all groups clearly accept passive constructions with transitive verbs and class II psych-verbs. This is not surprising given that Spanish and English work the same in this regard. The general tendency is also to reject passives with unaccusative verbs (though not so categorically for the HS intermediate). Interestingly, we observe important differences across the groups with respect to the acceptance of class III psych-verbs.

To test for statistically significant differences, a repeated-measures ANOVA was run with the variables of group (e.g., control group, advanced HSs, intermediate HSs) and verb type (transitive, unaccusative, class II psych-verb, class III psych-verb). The results of this ANOVA showed a main effect for verb type ($F(2.572, 149.191) = 740.303, p < .001$), group ($F(2, 58) = 9.015, p < .001$), as well as a high order interaction between group and verb type ($F(5.145, 149.191) = 43.193, p < .001$). Next, I further examine these results, condition by condition.

Individual responses to the condition that tested passives with transitive verbs (see Figure 3) suggest a high degree of homogeneity across all informants and across all four groups; though more categorical judgments were provided by the control participants. As can be seen, all tokens

included in this condition received a rating of 3 “natural” or 4 “completely natural” by informants from the control group. HS informants follow the same trend. That said, two advanced HSs (#15 and #20) and six intermediate HSs (#7, #10, #11, #12, #16, #21) provided a rating of 2 “unnatural” to one token (or two in the case of #10).

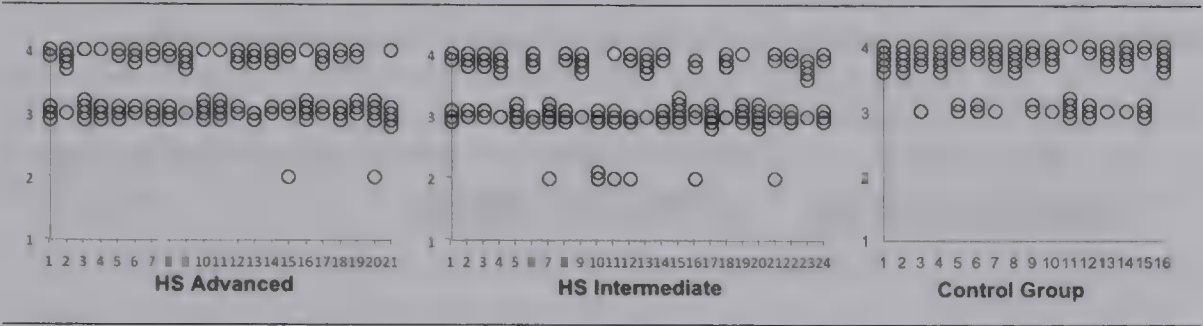


Figure 3. Individual responses for passives with transitives

To further establish whether informants were sensitive to the semantic and syntactic restrictions of the passive voice one needs to examine their judgments of passive sentences with unaccusative verbs. As can be seen in Figure 2 above, all groups largely reject this sort of construction. This, again, was the expected outcome given that unaccusative verbs are incompatible with the passive voice. Statistically significant differences were found between the advanced and Intermediate HSs ($p = .0002$). Moreover, the adult monolingual control group differs statistically from the HS-intermediate ($p = .002$) but not from the HS-advanced ($p = 1.0$). Crucially, further intragroup comparisons reveal that, in spite of this proficiency effect in adult HSs, all groups without exception make a statistically significant difference between passives with unaccusative predicates and passives with transitive predicates (Bonferroni *post hoc test*: control, $p < .001$; HS-advanced, $p < .001$; HS-intermediate, $p < .001$). Such a distinction is critical for the purposes of the present study as it suggests that all groups are sensitive to the syntactic and semantic restrictions of passive sentences.

In an examination of the individual responses to the tokens included in this condition (see Figure 4), it can be observed that all control monolinguals consistently provide judgments that reflect their rejection of passive constructions with unaccusative predicates.⁷ Compared to the control data, HSs reveal a higher degree of uncertainty and variability across and within individuals. That said, the trend observed is still in line with the ratings provided by the control group as most responses to the grammaticality judgment task fall in the 1–2 range (completely unnatural to unnatural).

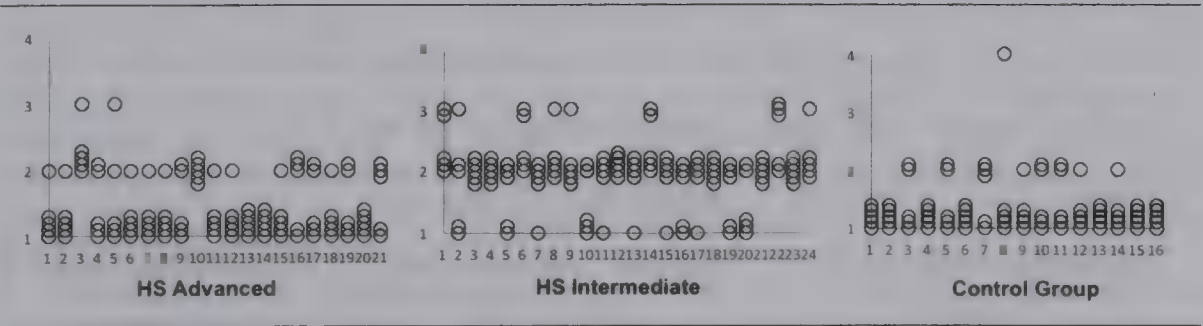


Figure 4. Individual responses for passives with unaccusatives

As was also the case with the condition that examined the informants’ judgments towards passives with transitive verbs, all groups tested herein clearly accept passive constructions with class II psych-predicates. Recall that this is a perfectly grammatical construction for verbs such as *molestar* ‘to bother’ or *asustar* ‘to frighten’ given their hybrid nature. Pairwise intergroup comparisons reveal that none of the groups statistically differ from each other for this specific condition. Individual responses across all four groups (see Figure 5) support this claim since, for the most part, all informants tend to accept the tokens included in this condition.

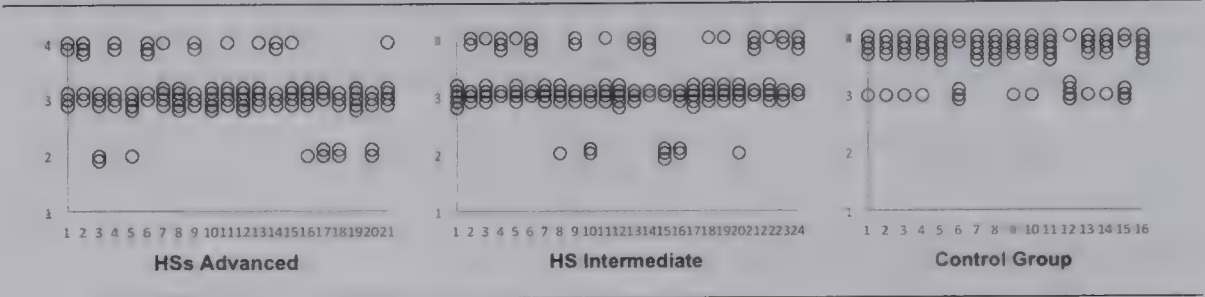


Figure 5. Individual responses for passives with class II psych-verbs

Recall from section 2 that *gustar* is an unaccusative verb and, as such, should be incompatible with the passive voice. That said, not all groups reveal the same judgments: whereas monolingual adults ($M = 1.10$) clearly reject this use, HSs’ intuitions reveal greater variance (HS-advanced $M = 1.86$; HS-intermediate $M = 2.22$). Upon further investigation, the results from pairwise intergroup comparisons reveal that results are statistically significant; this allows for insights into the nature of these HS differences. For example, these comparisons indicate that whereas the responses from the two HS groups do not differ statistically from each other ($p = 1.0$), the responses from the monolingual adults do differ at a level of statistical significance from those of both HS groups (HS-intermediate, $p < .001$; HS-advanced $p = .037$).

Congrary to what was observed in the previous conditions, analysis of individual responses for passives with class III psych-verbs (see Figure 6 below) indicates noteworthy differences between the experimental and the control group. On the one hand, the monolingual controls continued to provide homogeneous and target-like judgments. On the other hand, the two HS groups showed greater data dispersion, with informants responding along the full spectrum of answers. Out of the 45 HSs tested, only four advanced and one intermediate (#17) provided answers that fell within the range obtained from the monolingual controls. In addition to this, it should be noted that the tokens included in this condition elicited a response of 0 “I don’t know/I am unsure” a total of 9 times among the HSs (and none among the controls), something that did not happen in the previous conditions.

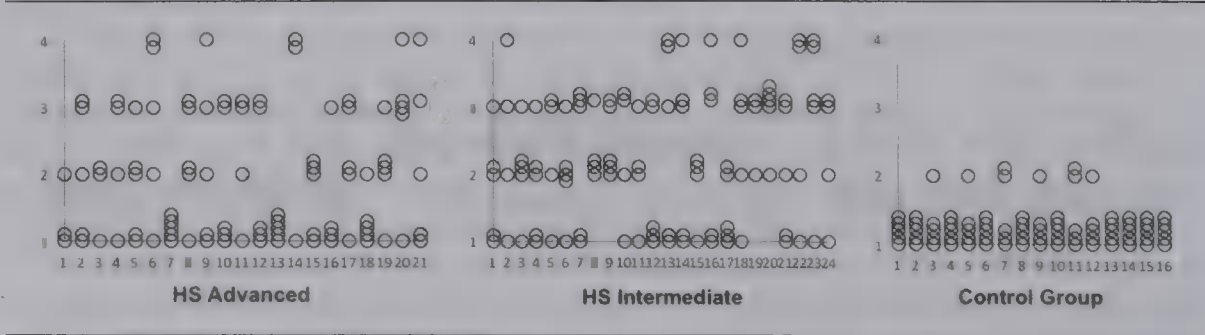


Figure 6. Individual responses for passives with class III psych-verbs

To summarize the results, it can be argued that the evidence provided thus far is consistent with the reanalysis of class III psych-verbs in HS grammars whereby *gustar*-like verbs can adopt an emergent optionality that is absent in monolingual Spanish grammars.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The goal of this study was to examine the current status of *gustar*-like verbs in HS Spanish and to provide an explanatory analysis of the data obtained. Building on previous findings, it was reasoned that in HS Spanish, this group of verbs may have undergone a reanalysis of their argument structure and may have consequently adopted the hybrid nature (agentivity/stativity) of class II psych-verbs (e.g., *asustar* 'to frighten'). To support this hypothesis, one would expect to find verbs like *gustar* or *encantar* used in the same environments and in the same ways that verbs such as *asustar* 'to frighten' or *molestar* 'to bother' are used in monolingual Spanish. This reanalysis, for example, would allow Spanish HSs to produce instances of *gustar* taking a nominative <experiencer> as the structural subject (e.g., **yo gusto eso* "I like that" or *(*nosotros*) *no nos gustábamos trabajar* "we did not like to work"); findings that have already been documented on previous studies (Silva-Corvalán 1994: 180–81; Toribio and Nye 2006: 268). Additionally, this innovation can also explain the intraspeaker variation observed in this domain because it involves having access to two different syntactic options. That is, having these two options available in their grammars would help explain why target- and non target-like forms are observed within the same heritage speaker.

Given the syntactic overlap between the two groups of verbs, direct evidence in favor of this reanalysis could only be provided via an experimental demonstration of class III psych-verbs taking an optional agentive syntax, a reflex of the proposed reanalysis. To be clear, I hypothesized that HSs' grammars would accept, or at least have a reduced threshold for rejection of this emergent optionality but that Spanish monolinguals' grammars would categorically reject it. The data reported in the previous section seem to suggest that this is indeed the case since 1) the HS and the control group were able to make precise distinctions between all relevant grammatical and ungrammatical conditions (i.e., transitive verbs, class II psych-verbs, and unaccusative verbs (not including class III psych-verbs)) in similar ways, but crucially; and 2) only the HS groups showed a tendency to accept passives with *gustar*-like verbs.

Admittedly, the differences observed may not be as categorical as one would want them to be to indisputably confirm the abovementioned hypothesis. However, I argue that this is sufficient to show that these results are consistent with the change I proposed in the direction that I hypothesized. That is, given the premise that the syntax of these HSs is dichotomous in nature, it logically follows that this sort of construction should either be allowed or rejected. In other words, if the HSs' syntax did not allow for this option, then they should reject it more categorically, very much in the same manner that they reject passives with unaccusatives. So, why is it that HSs' grammars would allow for this construction, yet their acceptance rates are not as categorical as other grammatical constructions? Here, I would like to argue that the proposed change does not imply that for the HSs, the agentive reading and/or the innovative structure for that matter is now obligatory. Rather, the hypothesis provides HSs' grammars with an additional alternative, an optionality that is precluded in monolingual Spanish. As a result of this, it was predicted that one could find variability in the data, whereby HSs sometimes would favor *gustar* used as true stative class III psych-verbs with the prescribed syntactic structure and some other times with the proposed innovation.

The analysis of the individual responses presented herein (see Figures 3–6) adds further support to this hypothesis because of the following three trends. First, it was observed that the individual judgments to the counterbalance and baseline conditions were not only fairly consistent within each informant, but they were also comparable to those of other informants within

the same group. Second, the individual judgments to all three counterbalance conditions were generally on target across all individuals and across all three groups indicating that they were able to discern between grammatical and ungrammatical sentences in the passive voice. Third, the larger intraspeaker variable acceptance observed among HSs for the tokens that tested *gustar*-like verbs in passive constructions (but not to the same extent in the other conditions) speaks to the legitimacy of the emerging syntactic option proposed herein since the HS grammars can opt for, but are not restricted to, an agentive reading of *gustar*.

To conclude, the goal of this study was to describe and explain the current status of *gustar*-like verbs in HS Spanish. It was hypothesized that this group of verbs had undergone a reanalysis of their argument structure whereby, in conjunction with its obligatory dative-experiencer syntax, Spanish HSs could also have access to an optional agentive syntax. Though not categorical, the main results showed that only the HS groups were able to accept passives with *gustar*-like verbs. Given these findings, and to the extent that the syntactic and semantic restrictions of the passive voice are maintained across the groups examined, I argue that the data presented are consistent with the proposed hypothesis. Despite finding support for the reanalysis, these data also leave us with a series of unanswered questions: what do these HS outcomes tell us about the nature of HS linguistic knowledge? Also, what is the source of these differences? Unfortunately, with the data available, it is not possible to determine whether incomplete acquisition, L1 attrition, input differences, or a theory of multiple grammars are likely the primary contributors to the emergence of such optionality. I hope that the discussion of the data I have presented here will encourage future research exploring these and other possibilities.

NOTES

¹ An unaccusative verb is a kind of intransitive verb whose only argument is internal. Crucially, structural subjects of unaccusative verbs do not take on agentive roles, but are rather underlying objects. A few examples of unaccusative verbs in Spanish include *aparecer* 'to appear,' *caer* 'to fall,' *florece* 'to blossom.'

² This is not completely surprising given that Spanish monolingual children do not use this group of verbs in an adult-like fashion until approximately the age of six years old (e.g., Gómez Soler 2011, 2012; Torrens, Escobar, and Wexler 2006), an age at which most HSs have already shifted to English dominance.

³ Although, again, a preference towards having the experiencer control verb agreement was clear.

⁴ Of the 16 informants, one reported having lived outside the country (Norway), but only for a period of 2 months. Additionally, besides three adult participants that reported having very basic knowledge of Russian, no other participants reported having knowledge of any other language.

⁵ Informants were asked to mark their judgments on a piece of paper. They were not asked to provide a correction of the ungrammatical sentences.

⁶ To measure the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each condition using SPSS 21. The values obtained were 0.584 (passives with transitive verbs), 0.697 (passives with unaccusative verbs), 0.788 (passives with class III psych-verbs), and 0.778 (passives with class II psych-verbs). These scores reveal that the internal consistency of the scale is highly reliable.

⁷ It should be noted, however, that although participant #8 from the monolingual control group provided a rating of 4 "completely natural" to one of the tokens included in this condition, I believe this to be an isolated slip-up given the fact that the rest of the ratings from this individual for this condition were consistently 1 "completely unnatural."

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APPENDIX

Grammatically Judgment Task

1) Transitive Passives

La casa fue diseñada por los arquitectos.
 El libro fue escrito por unos escritores.
 El libro fue leído por los estudiantes.
 La tarea fue completada por los alumnos.
 El paquete fue enviado por mis amigas.

2) *Unaccusative Passives

La mesa fue llegada por los estudiantes.
 El teléfono fue entrado por las chicas.
 El chico fue aparecido por mis primos.
 El vestido fue desaparecido por las chicas.
 El paquete fue salido por los estudiantes.

3) *RPPS Passives (Class III)

La pizza fue gustada por mis amigos.
 El pastel fue gustado por los niños.
 La película fue gustada por mis amigos.
 El chocolate fue gustado por mis amigos.
 El helado fue gustado por los niños.

4) PP Passives (Class II)

La niña fue asustada por los perros.
 El profesor fue asustado por los estudiantes.
 El chico fue asustado por sus amigos.
 Mis padres fueron asustados por los ladrones.
 Mi hermano fue asustado por los profesores.

Distracters

1) *Ungrammatical (adjective agreement)

La casa blanco es muy grande.
 El carro blanca fue caro.
 El café americana estuvo caliente.
 Las niñas altos eran de Costa Rica.
 Los niños guapas vivían en Colombia.

2) Grammatical (adjective agreement)

Nosotros vivimos en un apartamento.

Mis amigos son altos.

La comida está caliente.

Los libros de aventuras son interesantes.

Las películas muy largas son aburridas.

Por las mañanas siempre bebo un café con leche.

Ellos tienen mucho dinero.

El perro bonito es pequeño.

Las películas cómicas son divertidas.

El libro rojo es aburrido.

3) *Ungrammatical (verb agreement)

Nosotros voy al centro comercial los fines de semana.

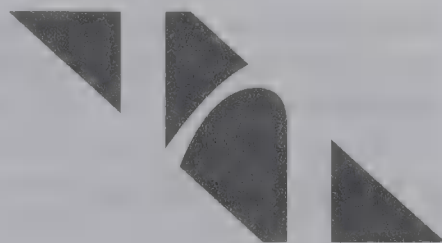
Ellas tengo dos hermanos muy altos.

Ella hago la tarea todos los días.

Nosotros hago la comida algunos días.

Yo compramos la comida en el supermercado.

The Effect of Reading on Second-language Learners' Production in Tasks



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Abstract: Tasks provide engaging ways to involve learners in meaningful, real-world activities with the foreign language (FL). Yet selecting classroom tasks suitable to learners' linguistic readiness is challenging, and task-based research is exploring the relationship between learners' overall abilities (e.g., reading, grammatical) and the complexity and accuracy of their production (Skehan and Foster 2012). The present study examines the effects of learners' reading abilities prior to a task and reading behaviors during the task on their production of linguistic complexity and accuracy. Fifty third-year, university-level FL learners of Spanish participated in two tasks. In each, they first explored a 3D world to seek clues to a mystery, after which pairs solved the mystery in synchronous computer mediated communication (SCMC). To gauge their reading abilities, learners completed a reading comprehension test (prior to the tasks). Technologies within the 3D world tracked learners' reading behaviors. The SCMC data was analyzed for linguistic complexity and accuracy. Regression and exploratory analyses showed that learners' production of linguistic complexity and accuracy in SCMC was the result of not just their prior reading abilities but also their reading behaviors while exploring the 3D world.

Keywords: 3D world/mundo de 3D, complexity/complejidad, computer assisted language learning/aprendizaje de lenguas asistido por computadora, tasks/tareas, TBLT/aprendizaje a base de tareas

1. Introduction

Proficiency is a key issue in task-based language teaching (TBLT) research today. In tasks “meaning is primary; there is a relationship to the real world; task completion has some priority; and the assessment of task performance is in terms of task outcome” (Skehan 1996: 38). TBLT can be an engaging way of involving learners in meaningful activities with the foreign language (FL). Yet deciding to use a task is challenging since the teacher must determine whether it is suitable for the students' proficiency level. Students may not participate if they are not ready to use the linguistic elements necessary for the task (Li 2003). Skehan and Foster (2012) write:

It is a long-standing problem in using task-based approaches to instruction that we need to have a stronger sense of task difficulty, especially as this may impact upon task sequencing. . . . They can be eased, for less proficient learners. Equally, they can be made more difficult for more advanced learners who need to be stretched. (183)

TBLT research on task difficulty focuses on task-external readiness factors such as task familiarity, planning, and repetition (Bui 2014; Skehan and Foster 2012). Task difficulty also depends on learner characteristics, such as proficiency, which is not well understood. Proficiency has been operationalized broadly (e.g., TOEFL scores) even though most tasks focus on a particular skill, such as listening or reading. For instance, in tasks containing written input, learners' reading comprehension skills play a significant role. To better understand the role of learner

characteristics in tasks, the present study examines the effects of learners' reading abilities and learner reading behaviors in a 3D world on the linguistic complexity produced by learners when engaged in a task.

2. Background Literature

2.1 Task Appropriateness, Difficulty, and Proficiency

Teachers want students to engage in tasks to develop their proficiency, but they are sometimes unsure about whether a task is appropriate. Students may avoid using the second language (L2) in overly difficult tasks (Littlewood 2007). In a receptive task, teachers must consider whether learners read well enough to complete the task. In a production task, teachers must consider learners' abilities to produce the language. Three factors determine a task's difficulty: 1) variables inherent to the task (e.g., task conditions, nature of the input); 2) procedures used to complete the task (e.g., use of a pre-task activity, planning time); and 3) individual factors brought to the task, such as motivation and proficiency level (Robinson 2001). Of these individual learner characteristics, proficiency is an important but poorly understood factor (Bei 2010; Bui 2014). Much TBLT research gauges a task's success with three aspects of learner production: complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) (Delaney 2012).¹ Yet we know little about how a learner's abilities prior to a task (i.e., readiness) influences CAF, even though TBLT advocates argue that task design must be compatible with students' overall development (cf. Samuda and Bygate 2008: 60). Recent TBLT research suspects that learners' overall proficiency determines the production of complexity and autonomy (Collentine 2011) and whether processing complexity in input influences the production of complexity (Collentine 2013).

2.2 Proficiency in TBLT Research

What role does proficiency play in TBLT research and how is it measured? Because research examining learner proficiency has concentrated on intermediate-level learners (Bei 2010), we know less about its effects on other instructional levels. With the little research we have, some suggest that proficiency influences how learners interact. Implementing tasks can be challenging because more proficient learners often become bored while less proficient ones struggle (Littlewood 2007). While Watanabe and Swain (2007) found that proficiency did not affect how much learners assist each other during interaction, Storch and Aldosari (2012) found that learners with different proficiency levels (e.g., a high-low pairing) where one takes a dominant role produce more than other pairing types.

TBLT research studies the role of planning to understand the amount and the type of task preparation that positively affects CAF (Foster and Skehan 1996). Some reason that planning's effect on CAF depends on one's proficiency level (Kawauchi 2005; Ortega 2005; Wigglesworth 1997). Fluency generally increases with planning (Ortega 1999; Wigglesworth 1997). Nonetheless, the picture becomes more complicated when proficiency is considered. Planning positively affects CAF when learners are at high levels of proficiency (Ortega 1999; Wigglesworth 1997). Kawauchi (2005) established that planning affected intermediate level learners' fluency and complexity when repeating a task since it allowed them access to relevant L2 knowledge while planning only impacted beginning learners' accuracy. Similarly, Bei (2010) found that planning benefits beginners' complexity and accuracy. Bui (2014) shows a strong relationship between proficiency and accuracy, some between proficiency and complexity, and little relationship between proficiency and fluency.

Much TBLT research defines proficiency broadly, with operationalizations such as TOEFL score, instructional level, or local (e.g., STEP EIKEN scores, Japan; EIKEN 2015) assessments (Norris 2005). While recent research has examined the impact of non-linguistic factors such as

prior subject-area knowledge on task performance (cf. Adams and Nik Mohd Alwi 2014), TBLT advocates have begun to stress that the research to date has largely ignored the role of linguistic abilities on task performance (cf. Macaro 2014). The research to date has not examined task-specific abilities relating to language abilities prior to a task and its impact on task performance. It would be helpful to elucidate proficiency's role from the perspective of a skill that is critical to a task's design, such as the effect of reading abilities on what learners do during the task and on CAF.

2.3 Reading and CALL-based TBLT

Much of TBLT set in CALL requires learners to process input because its multimedia richness allows learners to listen to video and read text in many forms (Chapelle 2009; Russell 2014). Indeed, not only does CALL research require an understanding of the reading process, Chapelle (2009) implies that the reading process in CALL will be qualitatively different from other types of input processing (e.g., reading an article): "As a consequence, all approaches to SLA that theorize a role for linguistic input need to consider the way that technology changes linguistic input and how learners' access to new forms of input might affect acquisition" (209).

The input in a 3D world is different from classroom input, yet not well understood. A 3D world provides multiple visual cues for interpreting sentences and words. Reading in a 3D world is perhaps more contextualized than reading in the classroom since virtual worlds do not resemble traditional classrooms (Zheng and Newgarden 2012). Because traditional classrooms have a limited "semiotic budget" (van Lier 2004: 96), teachers in these settings seek to provide students with not only authentic input but also opportunities to engage in communication approximating real-life contexts.

Conversely, virtual worlds such as Second Life offer avatar experiences where learners are immersed in native-speaker communities (Zheng and Newgarden 2012). Despite these advantages, Zheng and Newgarden (2012) observed that teachers primarily use Second Life to provide students with input, especially when authentic input outside the classroom is unavailable, even though virtual worlds offer more affordances to learners than just input.² Regardless of whether teachers use virtual worlds as supplementary, authentic input or as situations where students interact with others (e.g., peers, native speakers), the ability to read the L2 is critical here. Indeed, users of Second Life and gamers in 3D worlds are highly dependent on their reading abilities such as when they read signs or even others' conversations. Thus, understanding learners' receptive skills and how these might affect performance in tasks set in CALL is crucial.

3. Research Questions

To address the question of whether and how learners' receptive skills affect the production of linguistic complexity and accuracy while involved in a task, the following research questions were generated.

- 1) Is there an effect for overall reading-comprehension abilities on learners' production of linguistic complexity and their accuracy in the SCMC portion of a 3D-based SCMC task?
- 2) Is there an effect for learners' reading behaviors during the 3D portion of a task on their production of linguistic complexity and their accuracy in the SCMC portion of the task?
- 3) Do learners' reading-comprehension abilities and reading behaviors during a 3D-based task interact with their production of linguistic complexity and their accuracy in the SCMC portion of the task?

4. Method and Materials

4.1 Participants and Procedures

The participants were 50 third-year university-level learners of Spanish at a medium-sized university in the United States. They were enrolled either in a grammar review or a composition course. All met or exceeded the learning outcomes of the previous course, a fourth semester course. The classes were traditional, face-to-face courses employing various teaching materials and activities employing group work, Internet research, and discovery-learning principles. While the courses involved speaking and writing, apart from this study, the learners did not chat or engage in instant messaging activities. The researcher conducted all segments of the study but did not participate in the experimental tasks. The reading test was administered on the first day, followed by the two tasks, which were integrated into the syllabus across two class periods (day 2 and day 3), each lasting 1.5 hours.

4.2 Materials: Reading Comprehension Test

To measure learners' reading comprehension skills in Spanish, the researcher designed, piloted, and implemented a reading test containing two written authentic texts taken from BBC Mundo, selected for their interest level and the learners' predicted unfamiliarity with the topics.³ The theme of Text 1 was sunshine's effect on romance while Text 2's topic was how cockatoos learn to open locks for a reward (BBC Mundo 2013a, 2013b). The researcher wrote multiple-choice questions about the main ideas and details of the texts, five for Text 1 and six for Text 2.

To ensure that the items discriminated between learners of different reading abilities, the researcher conducted an item analysis of a pilot of the reading test. Because the experiment was multifaceted the reading test was brief (with few questions), and so an overall assessment of the test's internal consistency was not possible, as the assumptions of a Cronbach's alpha could not be met. However, a unidimensional item response theory (IRT) analysis assessed the individual comprehension questions (Bachman 2004). IRT assumes that any given learner's performance on any given item is influenced by a learner's overall abilities and difficulty with the item. Of the five questions for Text 1, question 3 was omitted because most students selected the correct answer (probability level = 1.00; difficulty = -26.6), and thus it was not a reliable discriminator. The remaining items were able to moderately discriminate between the participants. Of the six questions for Text 2, questions 6 and 8 were omitted. Question 6 was answered incorrectly by most students (probability level = 0.22), even though its difficulty level was not unacceptable (difficulty = 1.3). Question 8 was answered correctly by most (probability level = 0.90) and its difficulty level was slightly beyond the acceptable range of ± 2.00 (difficulty = -2.2; cf. Bachman 2004). To assess whether the two passages measured similar reading abilities, the researcher measured the Spearman-Brown Prophecy formula to test consistency, which indicated that the overall internal consistency was adequate [$r(t_1, t_2) = 0.73$] (cf. Brown and Hudson 2002). Finally, the final eight-question test was administered to three educated native Spanish speakers. All obtained perfect scores, concurring with the researcher's targeted answers.

4.3 CALL-based Tasks

The researcher designed two tasks, each including the exploration of a 3D world—authored with Unity (<http://unity3d.com/unity/>)—followed by an iChat SCMC segment. Learners completed both segments in a laboratory on a local area network with iMacs set on conference tables. The tasks were a missing-persons case and a murder mystery, both of which entailed exploring a 3D island containing non-player characters (NPCs) and objects. Using arrow keys to move

in the world, learners collected clues as first-person characters (FPCs), queried the NPCs, and collected clues from 3D objects (e.g., notes, letters). Participants roamed the 3D environment and freely chose what to approach and how often. Upon approaching an NPC, learners were prompted with three possible questions in Spanish; clicking a question yielded a written answer in Spanish. Upon approaching an object, a written message in Spanish appeared, e.g., a diary entry, a torn note. For both tasks, after ten minutes, learners closed the 3D world and began the SCMC segment. Random, predetermined dyads shared clues in Spanish via iChat to come to a consensus about the missing-persons case (i.e., ‘Why is Angela missing?’) and the murder-mystery (i.e., ‘Why was Roberto murdered?’). Each SCMC phase lasted 25 minutes.

5. Analysis

The quantitative analysis employed hierarchical regression analyses to examine whether the learners’ overall reading-comprehension abilities and their reading behaviors during the 3D portion predicted their production of linguistic complexity and their accuracy in the SCMC portion. The following describes the measurements included in the analysis.

5.1 Reading Comprehension

This represents the learners’ reading comprehension abilities independent of the tasks. A correct answer received a score of 1, and an incorrect answer 0.

5.2 Reading Behaviors

Tracking devices provide a blueprint of learners’ behaviors in a number of CALL learning environments, such as when and how much learners engage available CALL features (Chapelle 2001, 2003; Collentine 2013; Desmarais, Duquette, Renié, and Laurier 1997; Pujolà 2002). In this study, tracking technologies documented to a database what learners read as well as how much time they spent reading in the 3D world. The following measurements represent the reading behaviors used in the analysis.

Table 1. Reading behaviors tracked in the 3D world

3D: reading time	Seconds spent reading question-answer pairs and messages in the 3D world. This included the time from when a learner clicked a question until the answer disappeared, such as when s/he moved away from the NPC. It also included the time from when a learner approached an object—whereupon a message was projected—until s/he moved away.
3D: words read	Number of words that a learner could read in a question-answer pair or a message.
3D: unique segments read	Number of unique question-answer pairs and messages that a learner prompted. (Learners could potentially read any question-answer pair or message multiple times.)
3D: segments re-read	Number of question-answer pairs and messages that a learner read more than once.

5.3 Dataset: Chatscripts

Each chatscript was collated by participant. The corpus totaled 8,720 words. Each student produced 174.4 (sd = 76.2) words and 20.1 (sd = 12.2) turns per chatscript, averaging 9.7 (sd = 3.6) words per turn.⁴ As shown below, the researcher calculated three linguistic complexity measures—one representing structural complexity and two representing lexical complexity—and one linguistic accuracy measure. Additionally, the researcher calculated a productivity measure, namely, number of words produced. It should be noted that this metric, which is disputed in the literature as to whether it represents fluency or linguistic complexity (Norris and Ortega 2009; Wolfe-Quintero, Shunki Inagaki, and Kim 1998), was included because an analysis of the lexical complexity cast doubt on its validity (see Results).

Table 2. CAF Measures calculated per student in the SCMC segment

SCMC: words produced	Number of words produced.
SCMC: type-token ratio (TTR)	Average ratio of unique words to total words per 50-word interval.
SCMC: lexical density	Ratio of unique to total content words (i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs).
SCMC: clauses per c-unit	Number of clauses per c-unit, which is a single complete sentence, phrase, or word and has a discernable contextual meaning.
SCMC: percentage of error-free clauses	Percentage of clauses containing no grammatical or lexical errors. All errors in syntax, morphology, and lexical choice were considered.

Python scripts calculated words produced, TTR, and lexical density. The researcher calculated the error-free clauses and clauses per c-unit. An independent clause represented the first clause of a c-unit. A dependent clause was headed by either a subordinating conjunction such as *que* ‘that’ or a coordinate conjunction such as *y* ‘and’ or *o* ‘or.’ Thus, for example, *creo que Angela *está *el culpable* ‘I think Angela is the guilty one’ would be counted as having one error-free clause (i.e., *creo*) and one erred clause (i.e., *que Angela *está *el culpable*).

An interrater reliability analysis assessed the construct validity of the error-free clauses and clauses per c-unit calculations. That is, two experienced researchers counted on their own the number of c-units and the errorless clauses in 100 randomly selected segments from the corpus. The two sets of scores were compared with a Pearson correlation, as each of the 4 datasets (n = 100) was on an interval scale. The correlation between the two researchers was significant for errorless clauses [r (df = 98) = 0.94, $p < .01$] and for clauses per c-units [r (df = 99) = 0.91, $p = 0.01$], indicating that they had the same assumptions about what were c-units and the errorless clauses.

5.4 Statistical Analyses

Five sequential (hierarchical) regression analyses addressed the three research questions. Both the reading-comprehension scores and the four reading behavior measurements were the predictor (i.e., independent) variables. The response (i.e., dependent) variable for each of the five regression analyses was one of the five CAF measures. Backward sequential regression analysis allowed the researcher to hypothesize an order of importance between the predictor variables based on causal considerations (e.g., the number of turns read determines the number

of words read, etc.; Tabachnick and Fidell 2001). The first variable considered for omission from a model is hypothesized to be the least important and the last variable to be the most important. A predictor variable leaves the model if its contribution falls below a threshold of significance as measured by Akaike's information criterion, which produces a model with enough complexity to optimize the amount of response-variable variation while not overfitting the model with too many variables (Larson-Hall 2009).

Reading comprehension was hypothesized to be the most important predictor variable, influencing how learners read throughout the task. Of the reading behaviors, "unique segments read" were next in importance since comprehension of the clues in the 3D world would be essential to task completion. "Segments re-read" followed, since learners probably re-read a segment to confirm a suspicion. "Number of words read" was next in importance, as this measure is dependent on the number of clues that are read, whether unique or repeated. Finally, "reading time" was considered the least important and the first considered for elimination because reading time is dependent on number of words read.

Together, the five regression analyses address the research questions based on the following rationale. The presence of only the reading-comprehension predictor in a given regression model supports an affirmative answer to the first research question. The inclusion of only a reading-behavior predictor (or a combination thereof) in a given regression model supports an affirmative answer to the second research question. The presence of a combination of both types of variables in a given regression model supports an affirmative answer to the third research question, suggesting that an interaction between reading-comprehension abilities and reading behaviors in the 3D world affected learner production.

Because multiple regression analyses addressed the research questions, the researcher adjusted the alpha at which any significant effects would be recognized with a Bonferroni adjustment. Thus, to reject the null hypothesis that any of the five models was not significant, alpha was set to $p = 0.01$ (i.e., $1 - [(1 - .05) ^ (1/5)]$).

6. Results

6.1 Variable Screening

All predictor variables were screened for basic regression assumptions. This revealed only one potential collinearity violation. Unique segments read and words read correlated at 0.57, which is only moderately problematic and so both predictors were included in the sequential regression analyses (Tabachnick and Fidell 2001); the remaining predictors only correlated between ± 0.10 and ± 0.30 , and so they were also included in the analyses. The predictor variables were also examined for violations of normality. Reading comprehension was too positively skewed, thus requiring a square root transformation.

A noteworthy pattern was found in the screening of the variables with regards to the TTR and lexical density response variables vis-à-vis the reading comprehension scores. Correlations between the traditional TTR metric (i.e., unique words divided by total words) and the reading scores correlated negatively [$r(49) = -0.24$; $p = < .05$], as well as the correlation between reading scores and lexical density [$r(49) = -0.31$; $p = < .01$]. As learners' reading comprehension scores increased, their TTRs and lexical density scores decreased. This highly counterintuitive pattern implies that learners who comprehend most of what they read produce language with less lexical diversity and less information; it also implies that poor readers produce more unique words and more information. It is well known in the literature on TTR that, as one produces more words, there are increasingly fewer unique words (Wolfe-Quintero et al. 1998). To resolve the counterintuitive pattern, the researcher first used a D transformation sampling technique to adjust for text length (Malvern, Chipere, Richards, and Durán 2004), which did not neutralize the text length effect. Next, the divisor was modified to two-times the square root of the number

of words produced (Wolfe-Quintero et al. 1998), which also failed to neutralize the counterintuitive pattern. In other words, with both well-known approaches to lexical variety, the effect for number of words remained.

This led to three considerations for the overall analysis. First, emulating approaches to TTR employed in concordance packages (cf. Scott 2014), for each participant, the researcher calculated a TTR representing the average TTR per 50 words.⁵ This eliminated the negative correlation between reading comprehension and lexical diversity ($r = 0.15$; ns). Second, since there is no known correction for lexical density measures, the researcher decided to include lexical density realizing that interpretation of any resulting model must consider the effect of number of words. Third, although not a typical CAF measure, the investigator included words produced as a response variable, realizing again that some interpretive caution will be necessary. As noted above, it is unclear in the SLA literature whether words produced is a metric of fluency or linguistic complexity (Norris and Ortega 2009). Thus, the analysis examines this variable's relationship to reading comprehension to better understand the cognitive processes involved.

6.2 Regression Analyses

It is important to note from the outset that reading comprehension did not correlate significantly with any of the reading behaviors, suggesting that the two types of predictor variables measured different aspects of L2 abilities. Additionally, two of the regression analyses produced insignificant models. There was no discernable relationship between reading comprehension or the reading behaviors and TTR, $F(2,27) = 1.554$, $p = 0.22$, and clauses per c-unit, $F(1,48) = 1.554$, $p = 0.11$. Thus, we cannot hypothesize a relationship between reading and lexical diversity nor between reading and linguistic complexity, based on these two analyses.

Regarding percentage of error-free clauses, the analysis produced a significant model from the predictor variables, $F(4,45) = 2.928$, $p = 0.031$.

Table 3. Regression model for SCMC: Percentage of error-free clauses

Variable	Model B	Standardized B	95% CI
Constant	0.323		[−0.045, 0.691]
Reading comprehension	0.109	0.28*	[0.001, 0.218]
3D: unique segments read	0.017	0.38*	[0.002, 0.032]
3D: words read	0.000	−0.43*	[−0.001, 0.000]
3D: reading time	0.000	−0.36*	[−0.001, 0.000]
R ²	0.136		
F	2.928*		

* $p < 0.05$
** $p < 0.01$

It is noteworthy that the variance inflation factor (VIF) for all of the predictors in the error-free clauses model was quite low, suggesting that multicollinearity did not affect the model. That is, each predictor variable made a unique contribution to the model. There were four variables predicting error-free clauses. While reading comprehension and unique segments read had positive coefficients, words read and reading time had negative coefficients. Thus, learners with higher levels of reading abilities and who quickly read many clues in the 3D world tended to

make few errors in the SCMC segment, suggesting that good reading abilities contributes to higher levels of accuracy in production. What remains unclear is why these learners had better accuracy when they read fewer words in the 3D world. It may be that the reading times were quick because what learners read contained relatively few words.

Regarding lexical density, the analysis produced a significant model from the predictor variables, $F(2,47) = 4.278, p = 0.02$.

Table 4. Regression model for SCMC: Lexical density

Variable	Model B	Standardized B	95% CI
Constant	0.846		[0.668, 1.023]
Reading comprehension	−0.075	−0.25	[−0.155, 0.005]
3D: words read	−0.001	−0.29*	[0.000, 0.000]
R ²	0.118		
F	4.278*		

* $p < 0.05$
** $p < 0.01$

The VIF for the predictors in the lexical density model was adequately low, suggesting that multicollinearity did not affect the model. The lexical density model’s predictors were reading comprehension and words read. Both predictors had negative coefficients, implying that learners with greater reading abilities produced less lexical density, which, as discussed above, is counterintuitive to SLA tenets. Most likely this analysis highlights that, like TTR, lexical density is extremely sensitive to total number of words produced. The following analysis sorts out this apparent contradiction.

The analysis of words produced yielded a significant model from the predictor variables, $F(2,47) = 5.507, p = 0.007$.

Table 5. Regression model for SCMC: Words produced

Variable	Model B	Standardized B	95% CI
Constant	−28.202		[−170.480, 114.070]
Reading comprehension	66.278	0.27*	[2.440, 130.110]
3D: words read	0.128	0.33**	[0.030, 0.230]
R ²	0.155		
F	5.507**		

* $p < 0.05$
** $p < 0.01$

The VIF for all of the predictors in words produced was adequately low. Like the lexical density analysis, reading comprehension abilities and words read affected words produced, although here the coefficients were positive. Thus, in contradistinction to the lexical density analysis above, it is most plausible to conclude that learners with better reading abilities and who read more in the 3D world produced a lot in the SCMC segment.

What is unclear, however, is what words produced represents. Does this suggest a relationship between reading and fluency in production, or reading and complexity? There is not a consensus in the SLA literature on what number of words represents (Norris and Ortega 2009). Thus, the researcher conducted a post analysis to see whether the syntactic features of the learners' production was similar to that of peers under writing conditions encouraging planning and monitoring of output (Yuan and Ellis 2003). It was hypothesized that, if both groups' syntactic complexity was similar, the metric of words produced was most likely a measure of linguistic complexity. However, if the participants in this study demonstrate comparatively simple syntax, the conclusion will be that words produced reflects some aspect of fluency.⁶

The comparison corpus contained 50 unedited compositions from peers in a third-year writing course. The topics were personal in nature (e.g., personal narratives, future plans) and the documents had between 281 and 902 words, for a total of 32,390 words. The baseline corpus was a sample of the *Corpus del español*, a 20 million-word Spanish corpus with written and oral data from a variety of registers (Biber, Davies, Jones, and Tracy-Ventura 2006). To obtain a sample consisting of robust native-speaker Spanish interactional discourse, the researcher chose documents that were categorized as an interview or a conversation, had between 250 and 600 words, and had between 10 and 40 words per turn. The researcher used a random sampling algorithm to select 50 native-speaker baseline documents, for a total of 23,122 words.⁷ Using Python scripts, the researcher tabulated the number of independent, subordinate and coordinate clauses for each text within the three groups. All counts were scaled per 100 words for the same of comparison.

The mean counts per clause and group were compared using a 2 × 3 analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Table 6. Mean clause counts per 100 by group

Group	Clause type		
	Independent	Coordinate	Subordinate
SCMC	57.62 (sd = 10.9)	20.3 (sd = 6.8)	22.1 (sd = 8.8)
Comparison	60.58 (sd = 9)	18.66 (sd = 4.9)	20.8 (sd = 8.8)
Native speaker	52.3 (sd = 9.2)	15.26 (sd = 5.2)	32.62 (sd = 8.7)

The results showed that there was a significant main effect for clause type, $F(2,441) = 62.494$, $p < 0.001$ (i.e., independent clauses predominate within all writing conditions). However, this main effect is more likely due to the significant interaction between clause type and group, $F(4,441) = 5.929$, $p < 0.001$. Post-hoc analyses showed that the interaction was due to the native speakers' production of significantly more subordinate clauses than the learners. The post-hoc analyses also showed no significant differences between the SCMC and the comparison groups in terms of the three clause types. All three groups produced the same amount of independent and coordinate clauses, statistically speaking. Thus, the only difference between the three groups was that the native speakers produced more subordination, as is to be expected. However, the participants in this study performed similarly to learners who presumably had time to plan and monitor their production, suggesting that the metric of words produced reported in this study likely constitutes a measure of linguistic complexity. Therefore, we can now more confidently interpret the words produced regression model: the analysis suggests that learners who both have good reading comprehension abilities and read a lot of words in the 3D world generally produced more linguistic complexity in the SCMC segment.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

This experiment studied the role of linguistic readiness in the production of the linguistic complexity and accuracy generated by 300-level learners of Spanish engaged in task-based SCMC (TB-SCMC). Proficiency in TBLT research is generally operationalized broadly (e.g., TOEFL scores) although tasks normally concentrate on a particular skill, such as reading. Previous research suggested that proficiency plays a role in learners' production of linguistic complexity and accuracy when engaged in TB-SCMC (Collentine 2011; Collentine 2013). Further, Bei (2010) and Bui (2014) report that proficiency interacts with task conditions (e.g., planning) to predict complexity and accuracy. This study addressed the issue by focusing on the effect of learners' reading comprehension abilities on their production of linguistic complexity and accuracy in TB-SCMC. It was reasoned that a reading comprehension test would reflect the skills employed in the study's tasks because learners read clues about a murder mystery and (separately) a missing-persons case in a 3D world and then used synchronous chat to solve the cases.

All told, only the third research question merits an affirmative answer. That is, the analyses showed that both prior reading comprehension abilities and reading behaviors during the task affected learner production. In other words, reading comprehension abilities alone do not predict accuracy and complexity, rather what learners read during a task should be an equal consideration. Learners with higher reading abilities and who, in the 3D world, quickly read many clues generated highly accurate production. An understanding of the relationship of reading to complexity emerged from close scrutiny of the dataset, forcing consideration of the number of words that learners produced.⁸ The analyses indicated that learners with better reading abilities and who read more words in the 3D world produced a relatively large number of words.

Interestingly, even though reading comprehension abilities and reading behaviors interacted to predict learners' production in SCMC, they did not correlate with each other. This may suggest that the reading proficiency test and the 3D world reading behaviors represent different cognitive processes. It may be that the reading test measured global abilities, such that learners employed a 'reading to understand' process; on the other hand, reading behaviors exhibited in the 3D world were an indicator of learners' abilities to 'read to learn.' Reading to understand involves processing the visual and linguistic message to construct meaning. Reading to learn, however, involves the same processes as reading to understand and critically depends on building connections between and among the information in a given text to achieve comprehension (Carrell and Grabe 2010). Thus, reading to learn is a much more dynamic process: learners scan for information, obtain facts, and build connections between ideas, sometimes for the purpose of synthesizing (Carrell and Grabe 2010). In this study, learners' reading to learn involved collecting clues to solve the task; essentially, they had to achieve an overall understanding of the 3D world but they also had to form hierarchical relationships among and between clues and alibis of different NPCs (Carrell and Grabe 2010).

3D worlds may be particularly effective at promoting reading to learn, since they elicit the constant interaction between interpretive skills, or top-down processing, and decoding skills, or bottom-up processing (Kintsch 1998). They may be an ideal environment for the top-down, bottom-up recursive reading process that is necessary to chat about the 3D world and complete the task. To solve the mystery one needs high-level conceptual ideas evoked by a visual organizer in addition to specific clues obtained through reading numerous unique segments. It is not surprising that reading comprehension abilities and reading behaviors appear to both be necessary in TB-SCMC.

Reading research has long known that schemata activation techniques can override overall reading abilities (Bei 2010; Douglas 2000; Schmidt-Rinehart 1994). One of the schemata activation techniques readily employed by readers is a text's visual support. Historically thought to only aid lower-level learners' comprehension, visual support like graphic organizers can extend the meaning of a text, even for learners at higher levels of proficiency (Frantzen 2003; Harris

2003). In this study, the 3D world is the visual support, and the learners are moving around in it, participating in it. Frantzen (2003) showed that a visual context helps learners derive meaning from unknown words they encounter. In this study, the visual support of the 3D world allows learners to connect words in the question-answer dialogs and messages from objects. The 3D world is the extension beyond the words that learners read.

As shown in Figure 1 below, learners can extend the meaning of the words in the message to the torn pages that they see in this object, helping them understand *páginas* 'pages' and the direct object pronoun *las* 'them' whose referent is *páginas* 'pages'.

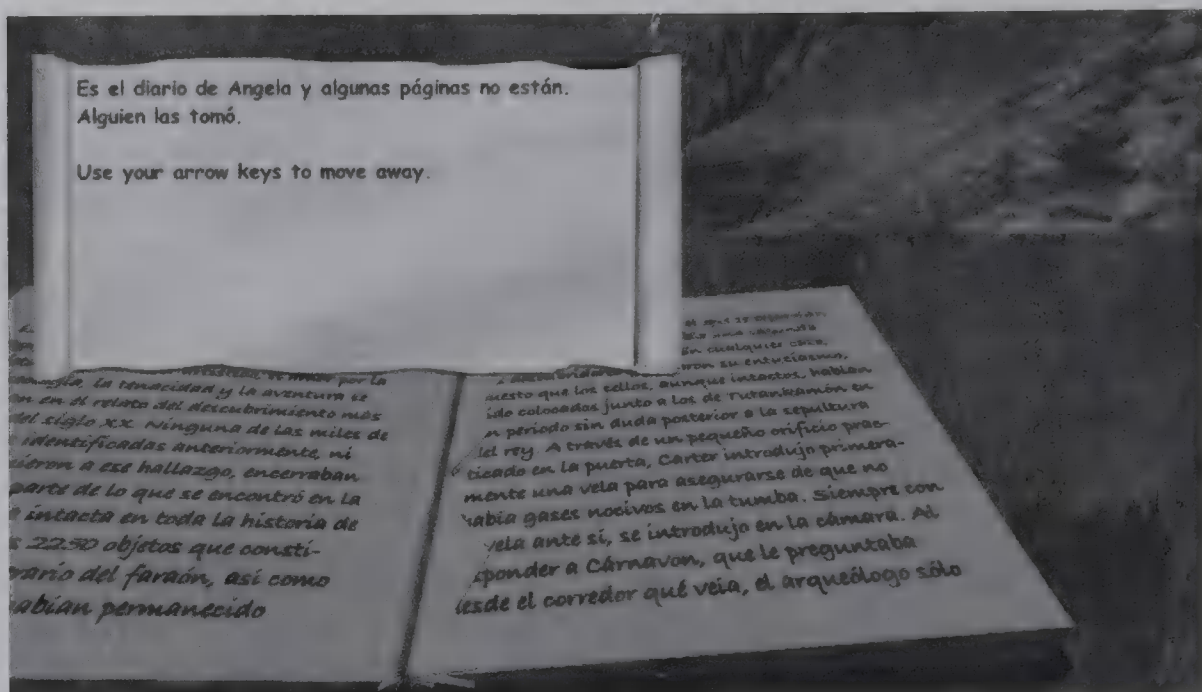


Figure 1. Screenshot of the message from Angela's diary

Similarly, in Figure 2, learners find out that the empty wine bottles provide an alibi for an NPC on the night of the murder by reading *Son las botellas de vino que tomó en la fiesta ayer* 'These are the bottles of wine that he/she drank at the party last night.' Given the proximity to Victor's hut (the NPC nearby) in this vast graphic organizer, the learners could easily determine that the subject of *tomó* 'drank' was Victor.⁹ The 3D world is providing that visual context, that extension beyond the actual words in the message, to aid comprehension. In a 3D world one has imprinted in one's mind the objects, places and people and their relationships to one another both spatially and in terms of the story line (i.e., their alibis) because one can depend on visual information, which is not limited by L2 abilities.

8. Limitations and Future Research

In this study, reading comprehension abilities were measured by only one instrument, a reading comprehension multiple-choice test of two authentic texts. Even though all possible steps were taken to ensure the instrument's validity and reliability, future research could employ a comprehensive battery of instruments. One such measure could assess reading abilities of statements or short paragraphs, similar to the ones found in the 3D world in this study, instead of measuring extended discourse as this instrument did.

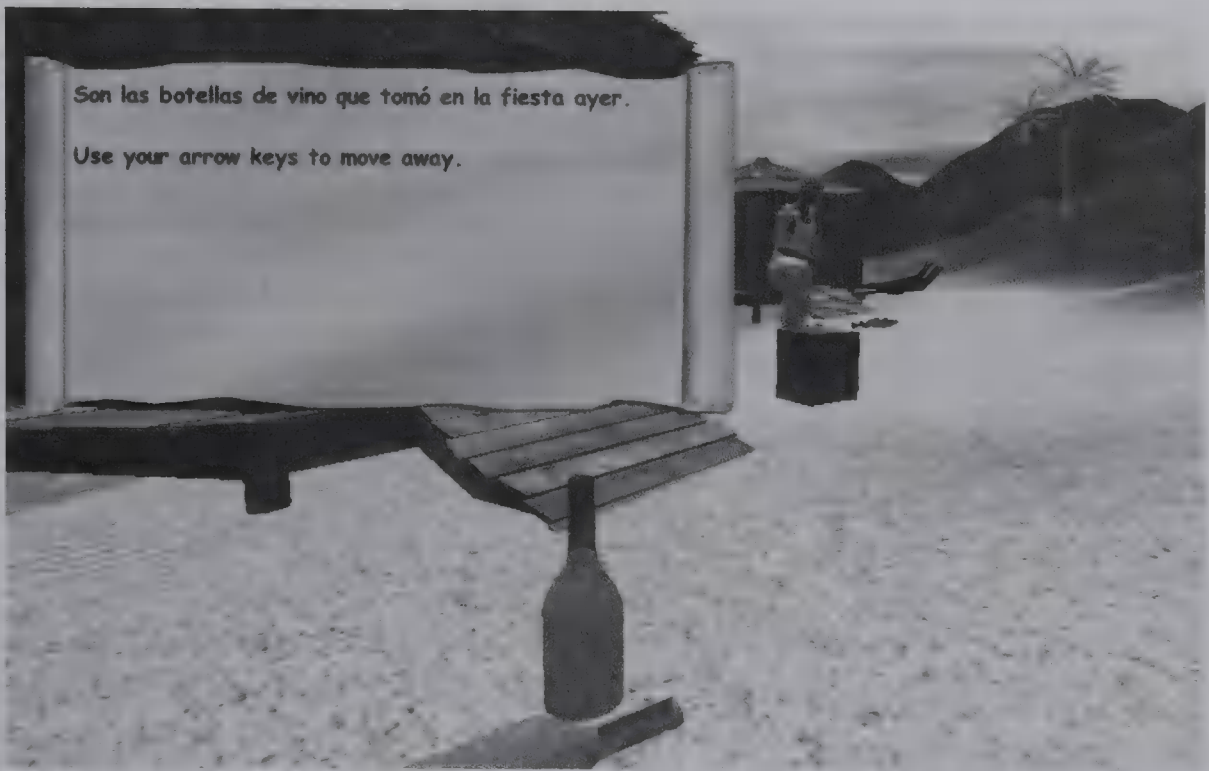


Figure 2. Screenshot of the message about the wine bottles

TTR and lexical density served as measures of lexical complexity in this study, common measures in TBLT research. Typical TTR and lexical density measures did not provide an accurate picture of the learners' production, such that it was necessary to isolate from these metrics number of words produced. Most likely this analysis underscores the suggestion that TTR and lexical density in TB-SCMC are extremely sensitive to number of tokens, and future TBLT research needs to examine carefully how it measures TTR and lexical density (Skehan and Foster 2012). Specifically, the intervals at which researchers sampling TTR and lexical density needs to be further investigated.

Despite these limitations, this study helps us to better understand the relationship between reading comprehension abilities, reading behaviors during the exploration of a 3D world, and the linguistic complexity and the accuracy of learners' production as they solve a task.

NOTES

¹These are common measurements used to assess the impact of TBLT. Linguistic complexity takes into account lexical complexity and structural complexity (i.e., words produced, type-token ratio, lexical density, and clauses per c-unit), while accuracy quantifies the number of error-free clauses. Fluency is not considered in the learner production of this study. For precise definitions of these variables, please see Table 2.

²Some propose that we change our focus in virtual worlds from "input" to "affordances" (Zheng and Newgarden 2012) because affordances are opportunities to gain input. Obtaining such input requires autonomous moves on the part of the learner.

³Because the author wanted a general measure of reading abilities in Spanish, participants did not complete an ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview or any other ACTFL measure of proficiency.

⁴Standard deviation reports a measure of how spread out the numbers are.

⁵The TTR calculation of any trailing segments of less than 50 words was adjusted for the number of words in the trailing segment. See the Results for further discussion of why TTR was calculated per 50 word intervals.

⁶The researcher recognizes that fluency represents several cognitive dimensions and number of words produced generally is reported in conjunction with other metrics such as false starts, pauses, and reformulations (Pallotti 2009; Skehan 1996).

⁷Admittedly, the researcher recognizes the limitations of this baseline since the mode of production is not the same; yet it provides a window into the complexity generated by native speakers in spontaneous production.

⁸Skehan and Foster (2012) as well as other researchers (e.g., Pallotti 2009) are beginning to examine the usefulness of the typical CAF constructs in TBLT.

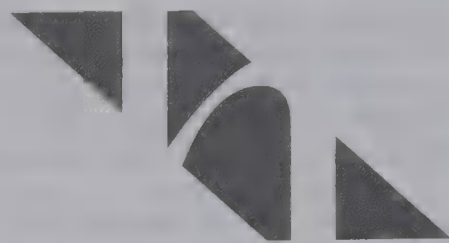
⁹Spanish is a null-subject language and so the verb *tomó* 'drank' is not preceded by a subject pronoun.

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Graded Readers: Validating Reading Levels across Publishers



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Abstract: Graded readers can be an optimal resource to help language students improve and personalize their learning experience. An extensive reading library with graded readers and well-defined levels of reading difficulty increases language students' chances of having a successful reading experience and become independent readers. However, when it comes to implementing such a library, there is a practical issue. A review of the graded readers available in Spanish reveals different proficiency levels and a lack of a uniform set of criteria for establishing levels of reading difficulty. Through the analysis of 203 titles by 12 publishers (from Spain, England, Italy, and the United States) complemented by an objective and uniform tool—a readability test—the present study validates and suggests alignment among reading levels across publishers. The ultimate goal of this study is to provide language teachers and program administrators with a uniform system of cataloging graded readers under the premise that a well-established library fosters independent language learning.

Keywords: extensive reading library/biblioteca de lectura extensiva, graded readers/lecturas graduadas, publishers/casas editoriales, reading level/nivel de lectores, Spanish as a Foreign Language/español como lengua extranjera

1. Introduction

Upon taking upper-level courses in a target language, students frequently struggle, and even drop the classes, because they apparently lack some of the necessary skills to survive beyond the elementary and intermediate levels of language instruction. Reasons vary, ranging from students claiming to not like reading to some that have never attempted reading an entire book before. Whatever the case, there is reason to believe that they do not feel prepared or ready to face the transition from lower-level courses into the upper-levels at which reading (i.e., literature) becomes essential (Chaves Tesser and Reseigh Long 2000; Hardy 2013). Unfortunately, very little research has been conducted examining this issue. The implementation of graded readers into the curriculum may help solve some of the reading issues confronted by language learners at the elementary levels by using an extensive reading approach that allows students to read and to feel successful reading, starting in the early stages of the curriculum.

Extensive reading (ER)—reading in big amounts for pleasure and enjoyment—has been shown to be an effective tool to improve reading comprehension, vocabulary, and language abilities in general (for a review of extensive reading research, see Day and Bamford (1998) and Krashen (2004)). Within an ER approach, learners select their own readings according to their particular interests and language level. If a reading selection is determined to be too difficult, too easy, or just boring, the reader can stop and choose a new one because there is no obligation to write a report or take a test; the only reward in ER is the reading experience in and of itself. But, in order to implement ER successfully, a library replete with graded readers is essential.

Graded readers is a generic term referring to reading material that is written in a simple way for the purpose of facilitating reading comprehension in a foreign/second language. In order to increase comprehension, writers of such readers reduce the cognitive demand of the reading process by using simple and highly frequent vocabulary, simple grammatical structures, and a linear, easy-to-follow plot line. Additionally, graded readers can be created by intuition and by structure (Allen 2009; Hill 2001). Most of the Spanish graded readers follow an intuitive method, whereby an experienced instructor or the author writes a text according to what he or she may think that potential readers might know (generally structures and vocabulary) or be able to do (at a particular level). Simplification by structure, though less frequent (Claridge 2012), is done by observing predetermined vocabulary and structures that are thought to belong at particular levels. Publishers use their lists of structures, vocabulary, and even sets of beliefs about what should be known or should be done at certain levels. As a result, there appears to be little consistency among publishers.

In terms of types of graded readers, there are two types: adapted and original. An adapted title is one that has been simplified or modified from another one, usually a piece of classical literature, for use by a target language population. Traditionally, an adapted title has been changed linguistically, that is, its grammar and vocabulary have been simplified. An original text is one written from scratch, in a simple way, exclusively for use by second/foreign language readers. Original graded readers are books that look like ordinary unabridged novels with a plot, characters, and abiding by description and narrative conventions as in real literary works for native speakers (Lerner 2000). In both adapted and original readers, the language used, structures, and plot are highly controlled in order to make reading comprehensible to the reader.

1.2 Benefits of Extensive Reading and Graded Readers

Research in second or foreign language education provides convincing evidence for the claim that reading becomes a tool that reinforces and accelerates acquisition of the target language when second language (L2) students read at their own level, understand, and enjoy a particular text (Krashen 2004). Since text simplification makes reading more comprehensible for L2 readers (Crossley, Allen, and McNamara 2012), graded readers may be used as an excellent source of language input.

Linguistically, L2 learners benefit from graded readers in a number of ways as they 1) provide a model of the target language; 2) serve as a source of incidental acquisition of vocabulary; and 3) provide an adequate and pleasant way to fix and acquire structures and writing style (for a review of studies, see Day and Bamford 1998; Krashen 2010, 2011). Moreover, graded readers, due to their simple and more manageable input—both at the level of the lexicon and the structure—make it possible for learners to comprehend and enjoy reading from the beginning levels. Since reading skills develop gradually (Eskey 1986), graded readers may be considered a first or preparatory step in this process, gradually introducing learners to authentic texts (Rodrigo 1997).

Other benefits of graded readers are seen at the affective and cognitive levels. The use of graded readers has been shown to have a positive effect on affective variables such as attitude towards reading and learners' self-confidence in their language abilities. For L2 readers, understanding a novel largely in its entirety can create a crucial sense of accomplishment. In spite of their struggles, they get a sense of accomplishment as they read, finish, and understand a book in the target language. Such a victory can positively reinforce the learner's perception that the target language, despite the challenge, is accessible and attainable, and, therefore, they can no longer feel discouraged from reading a novel in the target language. Accomplishment in language learning is important for many reasons, especially in terms of motivation. If the reading experience has been pleasant, and not frustrating, the reader will develop a positive attitude towards reading. It should be noted that this magic moment can be achieved with only one good book, a sort of

home run, and from the beginning levels (Day and Bamford 1998; Krashen 2004; Liburd and Rodrigo 2012; Rodrigo 2011). Research has also shown that a positive attitude towards reading, in concert with easy access to a well-equipped library containing a variety of genres and levels, significantly increases the chances for a learner to create a reading habit (Rodrigo, Greenberg, and Segal 2014). Additionally, it is worth pointing out that the ultimate goal for a reading program is to develop independent readers that may improve their language competence through reading.

Finally, at the cognitive level, graded readers can also provide information about the target culture and traditions, which is supported in the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (2006). Clearly, culture is an intrinsic part of any reading, and it is certainly also a component of graded readers. Authors may provide readers with an opportunity to learn about new topics, places, traditions, or situations of the target culture.

1.3 Graded Readers and the Importance of Access to a Well-defined L2 Library

Graded readers used as independent/self-instructional material should be part of an extensive reading library that will allow readers to choose their own readings from a variety of titles, levels of difficulty, genres, and topics.

Inexperienced readers, clearly an overwhelming majority of language learners, need well-defined levels of reading difficulty. As said, the first book is crucial because it will determine whether readers will continue to read. If they enjoy the reading experience, chances are that they will feel tempted, or less hesitant, to attempt another title. On the contrary, if the first book in the target language turns out to be well above the readers' language level, the reading experience will not only be highly frustrating but also boring. As a result, a struggling reader is likely to discontinue their reading.

If a library is then intended as a resource for personal and independent learning, one of its primary purposes is to provide well-defined levels of reading difficulty for each title in its collection. Although it is true that in order to learn a language the learner has to understand messages that are a little beyond his/her current level (see Krashen's 1982 theory of $i + 1$), the initial steps of reading in a foreign language should include more of " i minus 1" input, in order to cultivate confidence and foster enjoyment instead of frustration, anxiety, and boredom.¹ To this end, choosing the right book on the basis of accurate levels of reading difficulty available to the reader at the time he or she picks a title is an essential first step.

1.4 Graded Readers' Proficiency Guidelines and Reading Criteria

As seen, there is ample evidence that advocates in favor of a library and its graded readers. A logical question, then, is how to establish it. It is crucial in the logistics of implementing such a library that reading difficulty per title be readily available to library users. However, this is precisely the problem we are facing with graded readers.

Graded readers usually provide information about the level of reading difficulty they entail. However, this information is relative to the particular proficiency guidelines and/or reading criteria adopted by the publishers. Table 1 presents the publishers included in this study and the proficiency guidelines and reading criteria they follow in establishing levels of reading difficulty (for a brief description of these publishers and their graded readers features see the Appendix).

European publishers use the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) guidelines (2002), which distinguish three main proficiency levels and two sublevels per level: Basic learner (Level A1 and Level A2), Independent learner (Level B1 and Level B2), and Competent learner (Level C1 and Level C2) for a total of 6 levels, as Table 2 shows.

North American publishers follow the proficiency guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL 2012). There are five levels (Novice, Intermediate,

Table 1. Spanish graded readers' publishers: country of origin, proficiency guidelines, and criteria used

Publisher	Country	Proficiency Guidelines	Criterion
Anaya	SPAIN	Ø	Headwords
Cibed	ENGLAND	CEFR	Ø
CLPI	US	ACTFL	Ø
Difusión	SPAIN	CEFR	Ø
Edelsa	SPAIN	Ø	Ø
Edinumen	SPAIN	CEFR	Number hours
Eli	ITALY	CEFR	Headwords
enClave	SPAIN	CEFR	Headwords
La Spiga	ITALY	CEFR	Headwords
Santillana	SPAIN	Ø	Headwords
SGEL	SPAIN	CEFR	Ø
TPRS	STATES	ACTFL	Ø

Ø = No proficiency guidelines or reading criteria made available by the publishers

Table 2. Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR): Levels of reading proficiency

CEFR		Characteristics
Competent learner	C2—Proficient	Learners can easily understand mainly all written input.
	C1—Advanced	Learners are able to understand a vast variety of difficult texts and recognize implicit meaning.
Independent learner	B2—Upper Intermediate	Learners are able to understand the main ideas of complex texts dealing with concrete and abstract topics; they will even understand technical texts of their specialization.
	B1—Intermediate	Learners are able to understand the main points of the texts, written with standard language and dealing with familiar topics.
Basic learner	A2—Elementary	Learners are able to understand sentences and expressions of frequent use, related with topics relevant to the reader (family, shopping, work, etc.)
	A1—Beginner	Learners are able to understand frequent everyday expressions and simple sentences.

Advanced, Superior, and Distinguished) and three sublevels (Low, Mid, High) at Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced levels, for a total of 11 levels and sublevels. Table 3 shows the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (2012) for reading.

Similarly, despite their efforts over the years to adapt their reading levels to the CEFR guidelines, their 'headwords' are not uniform across publishers (Rodrigo 2014).

Table 4 shows the proficiency guidelines (second row) and reading criteria (third row) for the 10 European and the two North American publishers.

Table 3. ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012: Reading

ACTFL		Characteristics
Distinguished		Learners can understand professional, technical, academic, and literary texts with a high level of abstraction, precision, cultural reference or complex structure.
Superior		Learners can understand many genres with different topics, familiar and unfamiliar. They can draw inferences.
Advanced	High	Learners can understand fully and easily conventional narrative and descriptive texts of any length and with more complex factual material. They start to understand author's inferences.
	Mid	Learners can understand the main ideas, facts, and many supporting ideas from texts that are structurally and conceptually more complex.
	Low	Learners can understand conventional narrative and descriptive texts with high-frequency vocabulary and structures. Readers understand the main ideas and some supporting details.
Intermediate	High	Learners can understand fully and easily sort non-complex texts that convey basic information from personal and social topics.
	Mid	Learners can understand short, non-complex texts from familiar topics.
	Low	Learners can understand texts dealing with personal and social needs. Frequent misunderstanding may occur.
Novice	High	Learners can understand key words, cognates, and highly contextualized texts.
	Mid	Learners can identify high contextualized words and cognates.
	Low	Learner can recognize limited letters and high-frequency words supported by context.

2. The Current Study

2.1 Establishing Correspondence and Equivalences of Reading Levels among Publishers

In an attempt to organize a Spanish library for language learners, teachers and administrators face a challenging task when attempting to catalog titles from different publishers into clear and informative reading levels. The table above shows different proficiency guidelines, differing reading criteria, or lack of either or both aspects. Such diversity becomes a real challenge for a library project—one may wonder if so many levels are indeed equivalent—and especially for its potential users. In order to deal with the challenge, we need to find correspondences between the CEFR and ACTFL reading proficiency guidelines, and then to establish level equivalences, as shown in Table 4. These two issues are tackled below.

2.1.1 Reading Proficiency Guidelines

Although a crosswalk between CEFR and ACTFL is difficult due to the different interpretations of the CEFR level descriptors (Tschirner 2012), Swender, Tschirner, and Bärenfänger (2012) compared the reading proficiency levels by ACTFL and CEFR and, based on empirical data, established the correspondences in Table 5.

Table 4. Reading criteria and proficiency levels used by publishers to catalog their books

Cibed	Difusión	ELI	enClave	Spiga	Edinumen	Sgel	Santillana	Anaya	Edelsa	TPRS	CLPI
CEFR	CEFR	CEFR	CEFR	CEFR	CEFR	CEFR	Ø	Ø	Ø	ACTFL	ACTFL
Ø	Ø	HW	HW	HW	CH	Ø	HW	HW	Ø	Ø	Ø
A1	A1	A1: 600	A1-A2: 500	A1: 300	A1: 50-60	A1	Nivel 1: 400	<i>Inicial</i>	Nivel 1	Novice	Novice
A2	A2	A2: 800	B1: 1000	A2: 500	A2: 100-120	A2	Nivel 2: 700	<i>Medio</i>	Nivel 2	Novice-Inte	
B1	B1	B1: 1000	B2: 1700	B1	B1: 160-180	B1	Nivel3: 1000	<i>Avanzado</i>	Nivel3	Intermediate	
B2	B2	B2: 1800	C1: 2500	B2	B2: 220-240	B2	Nivel 4: 1500	<i>superior</i>	Nivel 4		
		C1: 2500		C1*	C1: 300-340		Nivel 5: 2500		Nivel 5		
		C2*		C2*	C2: 400						

* = Unabridged; HW = Headwords; CH = Class hour; Ø = No criterion

Table 5. Correspondence between CEFR and ACTFL levels of reading proficiency

CEFR		ACTFL	
Competent learner	C2	D	Distinguished
	C1+	S	Superior
	C1	AH	Advanced
Independent learner	B2	AM	
	B1	AL	
Basic learner	A2+	IH	Intermediate
	A2	IM	
	A1+	IL	
	A1	NH	Novice

AH = Advanced High; AM = Advanced Mid; AL = Advanced Low; IH = Intermediate High; IM = Intermediate Mid; IL = Intermediate Low; NH = Novice High; NM = Novice Mid; NL = Novice Low; S = Superior.

Consequently, the first challenge—different reading proficiency guidelines—is solved if we use the correspondences as established by Swender et al. (2012) and if we create a Reading Level (RL) column that conflates the two sets of guidelines into a uniform or standard rubric (see Table 6).

Table 6. Uniform reading levels for cataloging graded readers

Reading Levels	CEFR	ACTFL
6	C2	D
5	C1+	S
	C1	AH
4	B2	AM
3	B1	AL
2	A2+	IH
	A2	IM
1	A1+	IL
	A1	NH

2.1.2 Validation of Reading Levels

Table 4 points out the existence of three groups if the guidelines they do or do not follow are considered. Group 1 includes all the European publishers that use the CEFR guidelines (Cibed, Difusión, Edinumen, Eli, enClave, SGEL, and Spiga), Group 2 contains the US publishers that use the ACTFL guidelines (TPRS and CLPI), and Group 3 includes the European publishers that do not follow the CEFR guidelines (Anaya, Edelsa, and Santillana).

In order to assess reading levels among these publishers, we analyzed a sample of 203 Spanish graded readers by applying a standard measure. The books analyzed represent 53% of the total number of young adult titles by these publishers at the time of publication of this article. As Parker, Hasbrouck, and Weaver (2001) pointed out, "Readability formulas can be used to help guide more consistent judgment about the difficulty of a text (308)." Consequently, in order to compare the reading levels of the three groups (see Table 7), a readability tool measure developed by Metametrics was used, The Spanish Lexile Analyzer.² Readability tests measure the level of difficulty, or reading demand, of a text by evaluating text complexity, a notion that is defined by syntactic complexity as reflected by sentence length (the longer the sentence, the more complex it is) and by semantic complexity, a function of word frequency (the more frequent a word, the less complex it is). Although readability formulas may estimate reading levels for a sample of 100 words (Nuttall 1996), in our study, the readability level was determined by analyzing the first 1000 words of each title, which provided a good 'taste' of each book in terms of reading demand. However, since whole books were not analyzed, we should consider the reading values reported here as estimates.

In the task of comparing and validating the consistency of reading difficulty among the three groups, as presented in Table 4, the leftmost column in Table 7 presents the reading levels (RL) used to test the level equivalences.

In what follows, we will compare the reading values of the different publishers under the established uniformed RLs presented above. The purpose is to determine if the different groups can be merged into the single standard RLs suggested here. Exploratory analysis of the data through frequency distributions showed that the data was normally distributed. In order to determine whether the RL of the three groups differ significantly, we used the statistical analysis of variance (ANOVA). This statistical analysis will allow us to determine whether we can consider the groups compared equal for the purpose of merging them into one single group. The level of significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

The descriptive data presented in the tables below show the readability values of the titles analyzed. The three digit figures are lexile values that indicate the reading demand of a particular text (the higher the lexile value, the more challenging the book). For the purpose of describing the data, 'lexile values' will be referred to as 'reading values'.

2.2 Analysis of Reading Levels

2.2.1 Reading Level 1

Table 8 shows the reading values for the 48 Level 1 books by the three groups. Two outliers at RL1 were excluded from the analysis because they were higher values (1200L) that could skew the data and make the distribution abnormal. The table shows that the average reading value for the 15 books in the CEFR group is 499L, with a range as low as 360L to as high as 770L. The 14 books analyzed in the no-CEFR group have an average of 522L, with 250L being the lowest value and 740L the highest. The average value for the 19 books in the ACTFL group is 440L, with a minimum of 260L and a maximum of 680L.

One-way ANOVA showed that the mean values of the three groups did not significantly differ, ($p = .66$, ns.). Therefore, they could be considered equal: level 1 of Santillana, the initial level of Anaya, and level 1 of Edelsa were deemed as equivalent to CEFR level A1 and to ACTFL Novice Level. Consequently, all of them could be merged in a uniform RL1.

Books at RL1 had an average of 8.7 words per sentence, with a minimum of 5.8 and a maximum of 13.2 words per sentence. The average number of pages per book at Level 1 is 53 and 7535 words. Out of the 48 titles reviewed here RL1, TPRS, CLPI, and Santillana have the least challenging books, while Difusión and Edelsa had the most challenging ones studied here.

Table 7. Standard reading levels to be tested³

Reading Levels	CEFR						No-CEFR			ACTFL		
	Cideb	Difusión	Edi	ELI	enClave	SGEL	Spiga	Anaya	Santillana	Edelsa	TPRS	CPLI
1	A1	A1	A1	A1	A1-A2	A1	A1	Inicial	Nivel 1	Nivel 1	Novice	Novice
2	A2	A2	A2	A2		A2	A2	Medio	Nivel 2	Nivel 2		Intermediate
3	B1	B1	B1	B1	B1	B1	B1	Avanzado	Nivel 3	Nivel 3		
4	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	B2	Superior	Nivel 4	Nivel 4		
5	C1	—	C1	C1 ⁵	C1	—	C1		Nivel 5	Nivel 5		
6	—	—	C2	C2	—	—	C2		Nivel 6	Nivel 6		

Table 8. Reading values for Level 1 by group and publishers (N = 48)

	Group	Publishers	N	Min	Max	M	SD
RL1	CEFR	Difusión	9	360	770	481	122
		Edinumen	3	380	600	510	120
		ELI	2	410	620	515	148
		SGEL	1	490	490	490	—
		TOTAL	15	360	770	499	130
	No-CEFR	Anaya	3	550	670	593	67
		Edelsa	4	320	740	578	203
		Santillana	7	250	530	394	100
		TOTAL	14	250	740	522	123
	ACTFL	CPLI	5	260	570	416	112
		TPRS	14	260	680	471	102
		TOTAL	19	260	680	444	107

N = Total number of titles analyzed; Min = Lowest lexile value; Max = Highest lexile value;
M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation

2.2.2 Reading Level 2

Table 9 presents the reading values for level 2. The average lexile value for the 49 books in the CEFR group is 699L, ranging from as low as 330L to as high as 1060L. The average difficulty for the 13 books in the No-CEFR group is 603L, with a minimum of 360L and a maximum of 1060L.

One-way ANOVA results indicated that the two groups are not statistically different, ($p = .97$, ns.) Therefore, *Level 2* from Santillana, mid-level from Anaya, and level 2 from Edelsa are considered equivalent to CEFR A2 LEVEL. Consequently, the two groups maybe be merged in a uniform RL 2.

Table 9. Reading values for Level 2 by group and publishers (N = 62)

	Group	Publisher	N	Min	Max	M	SD
RL2	CEFR	Cideb	2	520	980	750	325
		Difusión	24	330	990	648	212
		Edinumen	7	540	980	679	166
		ELI	2	550	560	555	7
		enClave	3	500	730	633	119
		SGEL	11	640	1060	751	119
		TOTAL	49	330	1060	669	158
	No-CEFR	Anaya	2	470	1060	765	417
		Edelsa	2	380	550	465	120
		Santillana	9	360	730	579	140
		TOTAL	13	360	1060	603	226

N = Total number of titles analyzed; Min = Lowest lexile value; Max = Highest lexile value;
M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation

Books at RL 2 had an average of 11.7 words per sentence, with a minimum of 6.8 and a maximum of 21.8 words per sentence. The average number of pages per book is 47 and 9344 words. Out of the 63 books analyzed, Santillana, Difusión and Edelsa have the least challenging books, while Anaya and SGEL the most challenging.

2.2.3 Reading Level 3

Table 10 shows the reading values of the two groups for level 3. The 45 books analyzed in the CEFR group had an average lexile value of 771L and a range as low as 390L and as high as 1380L. The average lexile value for the 12 books in the ACFL group is 689L, with a low lexile ranging from 330L and a high of 1020L.

Table 10 Reading values for Level 3 by group and publishers (N = 56)

	Group	Publisher	N	Min	Max	M	SD
RL3	CEFR	Cibed	1	650	650	650	—
		Difusión	24	390	1080	778	212
		Edinumen	5	480	920	722	189
		ELI	1	610	610	610	—
		enClave	1	740	740	740	—
		SGEL	8	660	1380	963	220
		Spiga	4	790	1100	933	166
		TOTAL	44	390	1380	771	197
	No-CEFR	Anaya	4	780	1020	908	108
		Edelsa	2	540	560	550	14
		Santillana	6	330	820	610	175
		TOTAL	12	330	1020	689	99

N = Total number of titles analyzed; Min = Lowest lexile value; Max = Highest lexile value; M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation

The results from the statistical analysis did not show any significant difference between the two groups, (p = .11, ns.). This suggests that Santillana’s level 3, Anaya’s advanced level, and Edelsa’s level 3 may be considered equivalent to CFER B1. Consequently, the two groups can be merged into a uniform RL 3.

Books at RL 3 had an average of 14.5 words per sentence, with a minimum of 6.6 and a maximum of 35.6 words per sentence. The average number of pages per book is 53 and 9603 words. Out of the 56 books analyzed at this level, Santillana and Difusión have the least challenging books while Anaya, SGEL, and La Spiga, the most challenging.

2.2.4 Reading Level 4

Table 11 shows the analysis for level 4 books. In the CEFR group, the average lexile measure for the 14 books analyzed was 757L, with a range as low as 460L and as high as 1140L. The 10 books in the No-CEFR group have an average of 824L with a minimum value of 410L and a maximum of 1100L.

Table 11. Reading values for Level 4 by group and publishers (N = 24)

	Group	Publisher	N	Min	Max	M	SD
RL4	CEFR	Cideb	1	570	570	570	—
		Difusión	2	460	1140	800	481
		Edinumen	3	610	1020	817	205
		enClave	2	610	660	635	35
		SGEL	6	850	1100	963	113
		TOTAL	14	460	1140	757	209
	No-CEFR	Anaya	3	1030	1100	1073	38
		Edelsa	2	410	730	570	226
		Santillana	5	680	950	830	106
		TOTAL	10	410	1100	824	123

N = Total number of titles analyzed; Min = Lowest lexile value; Max = Highest lexile value;
M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation

One-way ANOVA did not show any significant difference between these two groups, ($p = .84$, ns.) concluding that Edelsa's and Santillana's level 4 and Anaya's superior level were comparable to the B2 level of the CEFR. These two groups can be merged under RL 4.

Books at RL 4 had an average of 16 words per sentence, with a minimum of 7.7 and a maximum of 23.8 words per sentence. The average number of pages per book is 77 or 14328 words. Out of the 24 books analyzed at this level, Edelsa and Difusión have the least challenging titles, and Anaya and Difusión, the most challenging ones.

2.2.5 Reading Levels 5 and 6

Due to the small sample size of Level 5 and Level 6, inferential statistics were not used, thus not allowing for an interpretation of any differences. Nonetheless, descriptive data are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Reading values for Level 5 and 6 by group and publishers

	Group	Publisher	N	Min	Max	M	SD
RL5	CEFR	Edinumen	3	870	1390	1150	262
		EnClave	1	810	810	810	—
		TOTAL	4	810	1390	980	262
	No-CEFR	Edelsa	2	620	830	725	148
		Santillana	2	860	1050	955	134
		TOTAL	4	620	1050	840	141
RL6	CEFR	Edinumen	2	620	660	640	28
	No-CEFR	Santillana	3	800	920	843	67

N = Total number of titles analyzed; Min = Lowest lexile value; Max = Highest lexile value;
M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation

Books at RL5 had an average of 19 words per sentence, with a minimum of 10.6 and a maximum of 34.9 words per sentence. The average number of pages per book is 69 and contains an average of 15227 words. Books at reading level 6 had an average of 13.5 words per sentence, with a minimum of 10.7 and a maximum of 17.5 words per sentence. The average number of pages per book is 94 and the average word count was 17587 words.

According to the results presented above, the suggested RL equivalences that we tested are confirmed. Table 13 introduces a summary of the descriptive data by the four RLs validated here.

Table 13. Standard reading levels and their equivalence across publishers

Reading Level	CEFR	ACTFL	Santillana	Edelsa	Anaya
RL1	A1	Novice	Nivel 1	Nivel 1	Inicial
RL2	A2	Intermediate	Nivel 2	Nivel 2	Medio
RL3	B1		Nivel 3	Nivel 3	Avanzado
RL4	B2		Nivel 4	Nivel 4	Superior

Table 14. Descriptive data by four reading levels validated

Reading Level	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Sd
RL1	48	250	770	479	125
RL2	62	330	1060	657	185
RL3	56	330	1380	787	216
RL4	24	410	1140	841	213

Although the range of minimum and maximum values did not allow clean cuts between RLs (reading values are not exclusive to one single RL), one-way ANOVA showed that the four RLs in Table 14 were significantly different $F(3,187) = 31.26, p < .001$, showing that the four RLs were clearly different from each other. Figure 1 illustrates RLs 1–4.

3. Conclusions, Limitations, and Future Studies

Graded readers have been shown to be an optimal tool to help students reach the reading skills needed to face the demand of upper-level courses, deal with authentic texts, and improve their language skills. Teachers and language departments need to provide extensive reading libraries containing graded readers for those learners interested excelling in the target language.

However, reading at the right level of competency is crucial for any successful L2 reading program. It is a factor that differentiates a frustrated learner from a motivated one. A review of 203 titles by the 12 publishers used in this study showed lack of uniformity in their criteria to catalog their books into different reading levels. This situation creates a practical problem for teachers and language administrators who attempt to set up a library. By combining readability measures, the reading levels proposed by the publishers, and inferential statistics, this study has assessed reading levels across publishers and suggests equivalences among them.

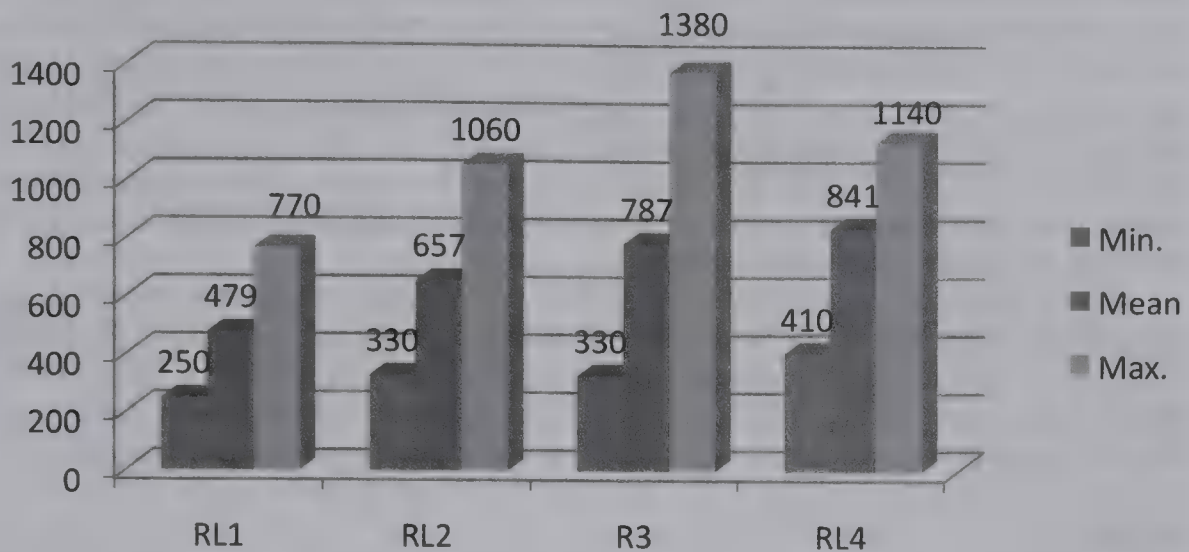


Figure 1. Descriptive data by reading level

Although a first look at the different criteria used by the graded readers publishers allow us to think that similar levels by different publishers might not be equivalent, this paper suggests that, as for the books analyzed in this study, they are. Consequently, language instructors and language program administrators interested in creating a library of graded readers can use the equivalences suggested here as a starting point for their extensive reading library. Nevertheless, the suggested reading correspondence and values presented in this study should be considered estimates and taken with caution since the sample used did not include all the young-adult graded readers by the publishers. Only 53% of the titles were used in the analysis.

Although readability measures are an objective tool that allows uniform estimates of reading levels across publishers, they should not be the only measurement of reading difficulty for graded readers since readability measures do not account for all the variables that make a text more or less cognitively challenging, such as the relationship between text and reader (Alliende 1999, Carrell 1987, Crossley et al. 2014). It is known that the reading process is modified by the reader (top-down processing) who brings his or her own previous knowledge and experiences. The reader's familiarity with the genre and the topic, cultural knowledge, assumptions when dealing with the story, and language proficiency, are all idiosyncratic features that need to be considered when evaluating the reading demand of a text for a particular population. The 'human touch' (instructors and publishers) plays a crucial role in determining the cognitive challenge (cultural and rhetorical aspects) that a text may pose for a reader, which readability tools tend to miss.

On the other hand, readability measures could also be used to denote progression within each level that may better reflect finer, and therefore more accurate, cuts of cognitive and linguistic demand among titles within a particular level. For instance, in our sample, the titles in RL1 had a range value from 250L to 770L. In cataloguing these titles, they may be divided into three sublevels: RL1—Initial (from 200L–300L), RL1—Medium (400L–500L), and RL1—High (600L–700L).

While this study adds to the literature base, it is not without its limitations. A potential limitation of this study could come from the fact that the readability values were not obtained from the entire books but rather the first 1000 words. It is possible, although unlikely, that the pages that were analyzed did not reflect the actual level of difficulty of the titles under review. However, it is strongly believed that a word count of 1000 words can properly illustrate the

issues discussed here; certainly an advantage when experience shows that inputting the data into a readability program is complex and time-consuming. Besides, if the linguistic properties of a title are the only basis for readability measures, processing an entire book does not seem worthy. Also, this study cannot provide any suggestion for RL 5 and RL 6 due to the extremely small sample size at these levels. Furthermore, the fact that this study included only 53% of the graded books available from publishers under review could be considered a limitation. However, it is also true that this sample covers more than half the total amount of available titles, and, in our opinion, this is a representative sample.

Finally, this study intends to address the situation that practitioners face when working with graded readers, that is, instructors wondering how to catalog titles by different publishers into uniform levels due to discrepancy of reading criteria among the publishers. Although this study is exploratory and a first attempt to provide an answer to equivalences among publishers, it should be considered as a good starting point. Future studies should certainly go in this direction.

NOTES

¹The concept of “i minus 1” (Samuels 1994, qtd. in Day and Bamford 1998) was presented to develop reading automaticity and sight word vocabulary; however, we have seen the benefits of “i minus 1” for the affective reasons mentioned above.

²The Lexile system uses a digital technology that allows an analysis of texts online. This measure is widely used in school districts nationwide to evaluate the reading level of textbooks. This readability tool is free from www.lexile.com.

³When two reading levels are conflated in one by the publisher, the data was analyzed in the higher level.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A

Brief Description of the Publishers

All the publishers analyzed in this current study have distributors in the United States. The contact information can be found on the publishers' web page and in their catalogs. Also, books from all of the above publishers can be found at EMC Publishing (www.store.emcp.com).

Anaya

Anaya has two collections and a total of 26 graded titles, all of them for young adults. Fiction is the only genre available. Eighty-one percent of its novels are adaptations from classical Spanish literature (*La Celestina*, *Don Juan Tenorio*, *El Quijote*, etc.), and the novels have an audio CD version. This publisher does not have titles for children or teenagers. If the reader likes classical literature, Anaya will be the best source of readings. Anaya has reading comprehension activities with answer keys, an introduction to the author and novel, cultural and vocabulary notes, and glossaries.

Cideb

This British publisher offers the collection *Leer y aprender* for young adults, with a total of 36 graded titles divided into five levels. Sixty-nine percent of the books are adaptations from

classical pieces. This publisher introduces specific grammatical structures per reading level. The Cideb online catalog is very useful since it gives information about the topic of the novels, a synopsis, audio samples, and pedagogical material. Some of the titles have an e-book version.

Command Performance Language Institute (CPLI)

This US publisher has 19 titles for beginners and true beginners. The novels include high frequency words, cognates, repetition, and simple structures. Their titles target teenagers in secondary school, and all of them are originals. Although the characters are children and the plots are extremely simple, college students with low proficiency level find these books interesting and enjoy them.

Difusión

This publisher has a total of 74 original graded readers and 17 series. Difusión covers a variety of topics: biographies, history, adventure, mystery, intrigue, humor, culture, traditions, and society. Its pedagogical material contains cultural information, glossaries, and reading comprehension sections. Some of the collections contain a CD and a digital version for iPad or similar.

Edelsa

Edelsa has 59 titles and seven collections. If the reader is interested in non-fiction, historical biographies, and historical novels, Edelsa can offer a good variety of topics. Not all the collections have reading activities. The historical novels and biographies have historical and cultural notes, vocabulary glosses, reading comprehension activities, and glossaries.

Edinumen

Edinumen has a total of 65 books of which a majority targets young-adults. Two of its collections are adaptations of movies and TV series. Edinumen books cover all kinds of topics: mystery, intrigue, adventure, and general everyday stories. The pedagogical material in its books have lexical and cultural glosses on every page, reading comprehension activities (for before, during and after reading), and audio CDs. Some of the collections are available on digital format (iPad, Android, Windows).

Eli publisher

Another Italian publisher, ELI, has 37 fiction books including titles for children ($n = 17$), teenagers ($n = 9$), and young adults ($n = 6$). Most of the adaptations are classical folktales for children (Cinderella, Snow White, etc.). This publisher has titles that seem very appealing for teenagers in secondary school. The books are interactive: the reader determines how the story unfolds by making decisions on how the narration should continue.

EnClave/ELE

EnClave has a total of 48 fiction titles. Fifty-two percent of the novels are for young adults. All the titles are fiction books. This publisher has a very nice collection of classical adaptations for teenagers and children.

Santillana

Santillana has 48 fiction titles, of which 60% have been adapted from pieces of classical Spanish literature. Eighty-one percent of the novels targets adult readers. Students in need of easy reading should check this publisher first. Santillana pedagogical material contains reading comprehension activities with answers. Cultural notes and vocabulary are included at the end of each title.

SGEL

SGEL has 55 titles. Of these, 74% are for young adults, in 7 collections, and 39% are adaptations from classical literature, the National Geographic magazine, and TV documentaries. SGEL is the best source of non-fiction reading, with collections on informative topics such as nature, animal world, cities, ancient civilizations, history, football, etc. SGEL provides reading comprehension activities, answer keys, glossary, and vocabulary, and CDs.

La Spiga Languages

La Spiga Languages offers a total of 39 graded readers targeting teenagers and adults. Most of its books are adaptations from classical literature.

TPRS Publishing Inc.

This American publisher has 19 original graded novels, divided into three levels: Level 1 (novice), Level 2 (novice-intermediate), and Level 3 (Intermediate). These novels are written for a High School population, but they can work for young adults, too. There is an independent publisher that should be consulted if looking for interesting historical fiction novels at the secondary level (www.miracanyon.com).

Appendix B. Features of graded readers reviewed in this study

Collection	Publisher	Audience	Genre	Topic	Simplification	# Titles	RLs	Audio	e-book
Audio clásicos	Anaya	Y-A	Fiction	Literature	Adapted	21	1-4	Y	—
Lecturas graduadas	Anaya	Y-A	Fiction	Adve & Myst	Original	5	1-4	—	—
Leer y aprender	CIDEB	Y-A	Both	Several	Both	36	1-4	—	—
Perfiles Pop	Difusión	Y-A	N-F	Biography	OR	4	2	Y	Y
Grandes personajes	Difusión	Y-A	N-F	Biography	Original	4	2-3	—	Y
Marca España	Difusión	Y-A	N-F	Cult & Soc	Original	4	1-3	Y	Y
Marca América Latina	Difusión	Y-A	N-F	Society	Original	4	1-3	Y	Y
Aires de fiesta	Difusión	Y-A	N-F	Society	Original	5	2-3	—	Y
Descubre	Difusión	Y-A	N-F	Culture	Original	4	1-4	—	Y
Camino de las estrellas	Difusión	Y-A	N-F	Experience	Original	1	3	—	Y
Novela Histórica	Difusión	Y-A	Fiction	History	Original	4	3	Y	—
Pepa Villa, taxista	Difusión	Y-A	Fiction	Adventure	Original	4	1-3	Y	Y
Lola Lago, detective	Difusión	Y-A	Fiction	Detective	Original	7	1-3	Y	Y
El Mediterráneo	Difusión	Y-A	Fiction	Intrigue	Original	4	1-2	—	Y
Primera Plana	Difusión	Y-A	Fiction	Intrigue	Original	1	3	—	Y
El puesto de fruta	Difusión	Y-A	Fiction	Humor	Original	1	2-3	Y	—
América Latina	Difusión	Y-A	Fiction	Cult & Adve	Original	8	1-3	Y	Y
Hotel Veramar	Difusión	Y-A	Fiction	Adve & Myst	Original	5	1-3	—	Y
Plaza Mayor	Difusión	Y-A	Fiction	Adventure	Original	4	1-3	—	Y
Gael y la red de mentiras	Difusión	T&Y-A	Fiction	Adventure	Original	1	2	—	—
Para que leas	Edelsa	Y-A	Fiction	Detec-Myst	Original	10	1-5	—	—
Lecturas clásicas	Edelsa	Y-A	Fiction	Literature	Adapted	19	1-3	—	—
Un paseo por la historia	Edelsa	Y-A	Fiction	Histo-Novel	Original	13	1-3	—	—

Appendix B. (continued)

Collection	Publisher	Audience	Genre	Topic	Simplification	#Titles	RLs	Audio	e-book
Grandes personajes de la historia	Edelsa	Y-A	N-F	Biography	Original	8	1-2	—	—
Lecturas graduadas	Edi	Y-A	Fiction	Several	Original	23	1-6	Y	—
Lecturas de Hispanoamérica	Edi	Y-A	Fiction	Several	Original	6	1-3	Y	—
Español con guiones	Edi	Y-A	Fiction	Several	Adapted	4	2	Y	—
Enigma y misterio	Edi	Y-A	Fiction	Mystery	Original	8	1-3	Y	Y
Aprendo español con . . .	Edi	Y-A	Fiction	Several	Adapted	10	1-3	Y	—
Jóvenes y adultos	ELI	Y-A	Fiction	Adventure	Both	9	1-4	—	—
Lecturas fáciles	enClave	Y-A	Fiction	Several	Both	17	1-5	—	—
Lecturas fáciles	enClave	T&Y-A	Fiction	Several	Both	15	1-4	—	—
Yago	enClave	T&Y-A	Fiction	Adve & Myst	Original	4	1-3	Some	—
Leer en español	Santillana	Y-A	Both	Several	Both	39	1-6	Y	—
Andar.es	SGEL	Y-A	N-F	Culture	Adapted	12	1-4	Y	—
Saber.es	SGEL	Y-A	N-F	Culture	Original	4	1-4	Y	—
Lectura hispánica	SGEL	Y-A	Fiction	Literature	Adapted	11	1-4	Y	—
Lector.es	SGEL	Y-A	Fiction	Relationship	Original	3	1-4	Y	—
Singular.es	SGEL	Y-A	Both	Culture	Original	3	1-3	Y	—
Lee y disfruta	SGEL	Y-A	Fiction	Adventure	Original	7	1-4	—	—
Historias que pasan	SGEL	Y-A	Fiction	Adventure	Original	3	1-3	—	—
La Spiga	La Spiga	Y-A	Both	Several	Both	39	1-5	—	—
Aventura joven	Difusión	T	Fiction	Adventure	Original	8	1-2	Y	Y
Aventura para 3	Edelsa	T	Fiction	Adventure	Original	9	1-3	—	—
Lecturas adolescentes	ELI	T	Fiction	All	Both	11	1-4	—	—
No collection	TPRS	T	Fiction	Several	Original	19	1-2	—	—

Continued on page 86

Appendix B. (continued)

Collection	Publisher	Audience	Genre	Topic	Simplification	#Titles	RLs	Audio	e-book
No collection	CPLI	T	Fiction	Adventure	Original	19	1		
Alejo y su pandilla	Edi	C&T	Fiction	Adventure	Original	3	1-2	Y	—
Juveniles	SGEL	C&T	Fiction	Adventure	Original	6	1-3	Y	—
Colega lee	Edelsa	C	Fiction	Several	Original	15	1-4	—	—
Lectura gominola	Edi	C	Fiction	Adve & Myst	Original	11	1-3	Y	—
Lecturas infantiles	ELI	C	Fiction	Folktales	Both	17	1-3	—	—
Lecturas niños	enClave	C	Fiction	Folktales	Both	8	1-3	Some	—
Leer en español	Santillana	C	Fiction	Fant & Adve	Original	9	1-2	Y	—
Aprendo español	SGEL	C	Fiction	Classical tales	Adapted	6	--	Y	—

Audience (Young-adult = Y-A, from 17 years up; Child and Teenagers = C&T, between 11–17 years old; Children = C up to 11 years). **Genre** (No-Fiction = NF). **Topic** (Adventure = Adve; Mystery = Myst; Culture = Cult; Society = Soc ; Fantasy = Fant; Detective = Detec; Historical Novel = Histo-Novel). **Reading Levels** = RLs.

Similar and/or Different Writing Processes? A Study of Spanish Foreign Language and Heritage Language Learners



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Abstract: Following a cognitively-oriented framework, this study builds upon the authors' previous work (Elola and Mikulski 2013; Mikulski and Elola 2011), which analyzed writing processes (planning time, execution time, revision time), fluency, and accuracy of Spanish heritage language (SHL) learners when composing in English and in Spanish. By analyzing Spanish foreign language (SFL) learners' writing processes when composing in English and Spanish, the current study compares writing behaviors in both languages within the SFL group, as well as provides a comparison between the writing behaviors of the SHL and SFL learners completing the same writing tasks. SFL learners wrote less fluently, performed more surface revisions, and demonstrated less accuracy when writing in Spanish than in English, but monitored more in English. However, they allocated similar amounts of time to execution and planning across languages. Compared to their SHL counterparts, SFL learners wrote less fluently and accurately and devoted less time to Spanish intersentential planning and English monitoring. The SFL learners performed more surface revisions in Spanish and fewer meaning revisions in English and Spanish than the SHL learners. Insights into cross-linguistic transfer of writing skills and pedagogical suggestions are provided.

Keywords: cognitive approach/enfoque cognitivo, foreign language learners/estudiantes de lengua extranjera, Spanish heritage language learners/estudiantes de español como lengua de herencia, time allocation/asignación de tiempo, writing processes/procesos de escritura

Introduction

An increasing number of studies have recently explored the needs of the two populations typically enrolled in Spanish foreign language (SFL) courses: Spanish Heritage Language (SHL) learners and SFL learners (Henshaw 2013; Montrul and Bowles 2008). Classroom-based (Elola and Mikulski 2013; Mikulski and Elola 2011; Montrul and Bowles 2008; Potowski, Jegerski, and Morgan-Short 2009; Spicer-Escalante 2002) or laboratory research (Bowles 2011; Henshaw 2013; Schwartz 2003, 2005) provides important insights into instructional methods, pedagogical practices, and language acquisition (Montrul 2010).

Regarding writing, studies have typically observed SHL and SFL learners' processes and production separately (Elola and Mikulski 2013; Mikulski and Elola 2011; Schwartz 2003). Over the last decade, others have started to observe them together, focusing on the areas of language production (Potowski 2007) and error correction (Bowles 2011). The current study uses a cognitively-oriented framework to build upon previous work (Elola and Mikulski 2013; Mikulski and Elola 2011), which analyzed the writing processes of SHL learners when composing in English and in Spanish. Hence, this study compares 1) various aspects of the English and

Spanish writing of SFL learners who were enrolled in a third-year Spanish class in a southwest US university and 2) writing behaviors between the SHL and SFL learners in this course.

Literature Review

Cognitive Theory

Research on the temporal nature of composing in the first language (L1) and second language (L2) as it relates to SHL learners and SFL learners is still scarce (Elola and Mikulski 2013; Mikulski and Elola 2011); nonetheless, we are beginning to understand the complexities that these learner groups encounter when involved in the processes of writing. The benefit of applying a cognitive-theoretical perspective to writing is that it accommodates the notion that composition is a dynamic process that occurs in real time (Roca de Larios, Manchón, Murphy, and Marín 2008). Hence, research on time allocation has provided insights into L1 writers' strategic behaviors by indicating 1) the connections between writing processes (Flower and Hayes 1981); 2) a higher frequency of translating ideas into words in the composing phase than in the strategic planning phase (Olive, Kellogg, and Piolat 2001); and 3) the retrieval and execution of ideas in short "bursts" (Chenoweth and Hayes 2001).

The current study—and the authors' previous studies—utilizes Kellogg's (1996) model to investigate writing processes. It divides the writing process into three subprocesses, which can be simultaneously operated: formulation, execution, and monitoring. Formulation involves planning (goals for writing, ideas related to goals) and translating ideas (selecting lexical and syntactical units to encode those ideas). The execution stage comprises the creation of output from the translation of ideas to the production of sentences. Finally, monitoring entails reading the text and editing at any level of the writing process. Furthermore, Kellogg's inclusion of planning and the translation of ideas within the formulation stage matches Hayes and Nash's (1996) approach, which ascertained that the unclear boundaries between planning and translating made these phases difficult to distinguish; hence, the present study follows Hayes and Nash in using the term "planning" to encompass not only abstract, conceptual (preverbal) concerns but also decision-making episodes related to the specific language as they emerge in the written text itself.

L2 writing research has to date focused primarily on when planning occurs and its effectiveness (Sasaki 2004; van Weijen 2009). For example, 1) planning occurs not only before but also during composition (Spelman Miller 2006); and 2) planning in the L1 is more recurrent than in the L2, but generally, the effectiveness of a writer's planning behavior is similar in both languages (van Weijen 2009).

Research on formulation has found 1) that higher-proficiency writers concentrate on formulation during the central stages of the composition and increase the interaction between formulation, planning, and revision (Roca de Larios, Marín, and Murphy 2001; Roca de Larios, Manchón, and Murphy 2006); and 2) that as proficiency increases, writers appear to "be able to strategically decide what attentional resources to allocate to which writing activities at which stages of the writing process" (Roca de Larios et al. 2008: 43).

Finally, regarding monitoring, the differences in pause duration and revision behavior for generalizing and reporting essay tasks suggest that task type influences specific writing behaviors (Matsushashi 1987). Local problems (e.g., grammatical issues such as verb tense morphology) also preoccupy all L2 writers, but skilled writers devote more attention to global problems (e.g., paragraph-level meaning changes) than less skilled writers. Furthermore, a certain level of L2 proficiency seems necessary for efficient revision (Cumming 1989; Roca de Larios et al. 2008). Although revisions have been examined through the lens of many taxonomies (Faigley and Witte 1981; Matsushashi 1987; Porte 1996, 1997; Roca de Larios, Murphy, and Manchón 1999; Thorson 2000), this study used Fitzgerald's (1987) definition of revision, which states that "changes may or may not affect the meaning of the text and they may be major or minor" (484).

Cognitive Processes in Relation to Fluency and Accuracy

L2 writing research generally considers cognitive processes in relation to specific writing outcomes such as fluency and accuracy (for more information, see Mikulski and Elola 2011). Regarding fluency (e.g., length of text, length of pauses), studies have shown that 1) L2 writers write at more length and more fluently than L1 writers, who tend to self-edit at every opportunity (Raimes 1987); 2) L2 proficiency, L2 composition quality, and L2 writing fluency tend to improve over time (Sasaki 2004); 3) pause length increases between larger constituents of text, perhaps because of planning (Spelman Miller 2005); and 4) pause location may vary across writers, but the writers themselves demonstrate consistent pause behavior across tasks (Spelman Miller 2000). Regarding time allocation and accuracy, providing time for planning seems to improve accuracy (Manchón and Roca de Larios 2007), suggesting that online planning may be more beneficial than pre-task planning (Ellis and Yuan 2004).

What We Know about SHL Writing Processes

SHL writing research has focused on several areas: grammatical accuracy and appropriateness of register (Potowski 2007); contrastive rhetoric (Spicer Escalante 2002); variation across discourse contexts (Martinez 2007); learner interactions on written tasks (Bowles 2011; Henshaw 2013); development of fluency and accuracy (Nichols and Colón 2000); and the effect of think-aloud protocols on SHL learners' fluency, accuracy, and complexity (Yanguas and Lado 2012). Nevertheless, despite the breadth of research, the cognitively-oriented perspective has remained relatively overlooked. One exception is Schwartz's (2003, 2005) descriptions of the writing strategies used by five heritage Spanish speakers while composing in Spanish, three of whom were English-dominant and two of whom had high oral Spanish proficiency. Using think-aloud protocols, Schwartz observed many similarities between the two categories of participants, despite their different levels of oral proficiency. Participants tended to 1) rehearse and repeat text to find the best way to express their ideas; 2) conduct more surface-level than deep-level revisions; and 3) intersperse planning and revision throughout the writing process instead of restricting their use to before and after execution, respectively. Furthermore, both groups performed similarly with regard to fluency, complexity, and accuracy. What these studies did not offer, however, was information regarding the amount of time devoted to different processes or a comparison between texts written in English and those written in Spanish.

Another study following the same theoretical perspective is Mikulski and Elola (2011), which compared execution time, planning time, monitoring time, accuracy, and fluency in SHL participants' writing in English and Spanish. Participants did not always behave similarly across languages. For instance, even though they allocated similar amounts of time to executing and monitoring in each language, they spent more time planning between sentences when writing in Spanish. They also wrote more fluently and accurately in English. Elola and Mikulski (2013) investigated SHL learners' revision practices and found that participants transferred their revision behaviors across languages, with most learners performing local and global revisions in both English and Spanish. Yet despite the surface revisions participants made, grammatical and lexical inaccuracies were still present, especially in their Spanish writing. Furthermore, the participants tended to focus on meaning in their dominant language.

Focus of the Present Study

Although a body of research on L1 and L2 writing processes exists, less is known about the comparison between SHL and SFL learners' writing processes when writing in either Spanish or English. Although an increased understanding of SHL learners' writing performance is useful in and of itself, a comparison of how learners in a mixed SHL-SFL classroom approach the same

writing tasks could offer additional insights. The present study, therefore, examined and closely compared the writing processes of a mixed group of SHL and SFL learners. This study seeks first to analyze the writing of the SFL learners and then compare both learner groups. The research questions guiding the study are:

- 1) In which language do SFL learners
 - a. plan more within and between sentences?
 - b. spend more time in the execution process?
 - c. spend more time monitoring?
 - d. demonstrate greater fluency?
 - e. write more accurately?
- 2) Are there differences between SHL and SFL learners' writing in English and Spanish regarding
 - a. allocation of planning time within and between sentences?
 - b. allocation of time to execution?
 - c. allocation of time to monitoring?
 - d. fluency?
 - e. accuracy?

Method

Participants and Setting

The study was conducted in a third-year Spanish class in a southwest US university that was developed for SFL students, although the majority of the participants were SHL learners. Both SHL and SFL learners, who received pseudonyms to protect their identities, placed into this course in the same way: they had either finished the second year of university study, obtained placement exam results assigning them to this course, or passed AP Spanish courses in high school.

Six SFL and 12 SHL learners participated (see Table 1). Those who had been raised in a Spanish-speaking home were categorized as SHL learners,¹ whereas those who had not were classified as SFL learners. Every SFL participant had received formal Spanish instruction previously, but the quantity and timing of the instruction varied. All SFL and SHL participants had completed the university's required composition course, but information about English writing instruction was not gathered.

Course Information

The third-year Spanish grammar course reviewed structures, mainly verb forms, in preparation for other upper-division courses. Students worked with the intermediate-level textbook *Fuentes* (Rusch, Domínguez, and Caycedo Garner 2005), which follows a communicative approach and includes several readings about Hispanic culture.

Instruments

Data collection took 50 minutes. During class, students watched two excerpts of a movie (in English with a few Spanish words), *Tortilla Soup*, about a Hispanic family living in California. The excerpts showed two dinners at the home of the patriarch: one with the father and his three daughters; and one with the addition of their partners, and some family friends. Although SHL learners likely had more experience with Hispanic families, which introduced the possibility of

Table 1. Participant information

Student	Do you speak Spanish at home?	If so, with whom?	Years of formal instruction in/at . . .		
			Elementary/Junior High	High School	University
FL learners (n = 6)					
Anna	No	Nobody	0	2	1
Anthony*	Yes	Sister-in-law, Brother	2	0	1
Dan	No	Nobody	0	0	3
Jennifer	No	Nobody	0	1	3
John**	No	Nobody	0	0	7
Tania	No	Nobody	0	0	2
Mean			0.29	1.0	2.71
Standard Deviation (SD)			0.76	1.53	2.06
HL learners (n = 12)					
Celeste	Yes	Everybody	0	2	1
Pablo	Yes	Everybody	2	2	1
Raúl	Yes	Everybody	0	4	0.5
Cristina	Yes	Everybody	0	0	2
Paula	Yes	Everybody	0	0	1
Nina	Yes	Grandparents, Parents	0	4	1
Sonia	Yes	Everybody	2	1	0.5
Celia	Yes	Everybody	1	0.5	0.5
Victoria	Yes	Father, Mother, Sister	7	4	1
Laura	Yes	Everybody	0	3	0.5
Dulce	No***	Nobody	0	3	2
Alonso	Yes	Grandparents	0	0	2
Mean			1.00	1.96	1.08
Standard Deviation (SD)			2.04	1.63	0.60

*Between high school and university, Anthony spent two years as a missionary in a Spanish-speaking country.

**Although John wrote 7 years on his questionnaire, conversations between him and one of the authors gave the impression that he had not studied that long (i.e., 7 semesters rather than 7 years). His information is presented as he reported it because we are not certain of what the correct number of years would be. If he completed 7 semesters, the mean length of Spanish instruction for the FL learners would be 2.25 years (SD = 1.08).

***Dulce's family speaks Spanish at home.

topic bias, this topic suited the students' backgrounds and vocabulary knowledge and had been addressed on several occasions during class.

After viewing the excerpts, the students answered questions with the same genre structure (comparing and contrasting) to minimize the differences in quality and quantity that can arise from responding to different types of tasks (Sasaki and Hirose 1996). Learners responded in Spanish to two Spanish-language questions: a warm-up activity that was not part of the study and the activity that was analyzed (a comparison of a specific aspect of the movie with their

perceptions of their own families). They also wrote in English to an English-language question (a comparison of how Hispanic families are perceived in movies/TV series with their own perception of Hispanic families in the United States). Participants could allocate the 30-minute-reponse time to the questions in whatever order they wished, move back and forth between questions, and use an online dictionary (www.wordreference.com) while composing.

Previous studies of composing processes have used diverse methodologies, such as verbal protocols (Roca de Larios et al. 2001), analysis of essays and questionnaires (Devine, Railey and Boshoff 1993), interruptions of students' writing processes (Sasaki 2004), video recordings (Matsushashi 1981), and keystrokes (Spelman Miller 2006). This study and the authors' previous ones (Elola and Mikulski 2013; Mikulski and Elola 2011) collected data via *Camtasia*, a screen-capture software program that records all activity on the computer screen in real time both within the word processing program (e.g., the words as they are typed, deletions, cutting and pasting of words) and in any other programs accessed (e.g., web browsers opened to consult the online dictionary). *Camtasia* offered information about the number of words produced and the time spent on planning, execution, and monitoring. Additionally, before the writing tasks, students answered a background questionnaire.

Analysis of the Data

Camtasia's timer feature was used to calculate time devoted to planning, execution, and monitoring. Although these processes can occur simultaneously (Kellogg 1996), each one was operationalized non-simultaneously as follows: Planning consisted of the inter- and intrasentential pauses that happened during the composing process. This study used two seconds as the minimum length for a pause, based on keystroke analyses by Spelman Miller (2000). Intersentential planning time included 1) the time that elapsed between completing the previous answer and the start of the one under analysis and 2) any pauses that came between the end of one sentence and the beginning of another within each response. Intrasentential planning time included pauses within sentences and time spent accessing the online dictionary (participants always used the dictionary while writing a sentence instead of in between sentences). Monitoring consisted of time spent revising and editing and also included the time that elapsed between finishing the writing of the responses and closing the word processing program, when participants were likely to be reading through their responses. Within monitoring, the amount of time devoted to surface and meaning revision was also measured. Surface revisions included changes to spelling, tense, number, modality, and punctuation, as well as additions and deletions that did not change meaning. Meaning revisions involved changes to microstructure (which have a minor impact in the text) or macrostructure (which have a major impact in the text). Execution time was defined as the time spent producing text—in other words, any time that the participants were not planning or monitoring.

The number of words in each response was also recorded to measure fluency. In addition to quantity of words, fluency was calculated in two other ways: 1) the mean number of words per T-unit and 2) the words-per-minute rate. To calculate the former, T-units were defined as one main clause plus a subordinate clause attached to or embedded within it (Hunt 1965). The words-per-minute rate was calculated by dividing the number of words by the total time spent composing the response (i.e., the sum of execution time, monitoring time, and inter- and intrasentential planning time).

Accuracy in Spanish and English was evaluated by taking into account all morphological, syntactic, lexical, and orthographic errors, except when they involved missing diacritical marks (accent marks, tildes), which were not easily accessed on the computers in the laboratory. After identifying these errors, accuracy was measured in two ways: 1) the percentage of error-free T-units and 2) the number and percentage of errors in various categories. Regarding the first measure of accuracy, error-free T-units provide better inter-rater reliability than holistic

evaluations or error counts (Polio 1997). However, because the length of the participants' texts varied, the percentage of error-free T-units was calculated for each participant; this percentage was obtained by dividing the number of error-free T-units by the total number of T-units in the text. With regard to the second measure of accuracy, the number of errors for each group was calculated in the categories of canonical gender agreement, number agreement, verb agreement, verb aspect, verb tense, mood selection, *ser/estar*, lexical problems, extra words, missing words, missing personal *a*, and orthography in their Spanish-language compositions.² An overall error rate was calculated by dividing the number of errors that a learner group committed by the number of words they produced. Inter-rater reliability reached over 93%, and disputed cases were determined through discussion.

Matched pairs t-tests were conducted to determine if there were any statistically significant differences across languages for the SFL learners for these characteristics. Next, independent sample t-tests were conducted to evaluate whether the SHL and SFL learners behaved differently from each other with regard to these characteristics. The significance level was set to $p < .05$.

Results

Overview of SFL Composition

Regarding measures of fluency and accuracy in each language for each of the SFL participants (see Table 2), on average, the SFL learners wrote significantly more words in English than in Spanish: $t(5) = 6.63, p = .001$. The mean length of the T-units was also longer in English: $t(5) = 3.54, p = .017$. Participants also wrote significantly more accurately in English compared to Spanish: $t(5) = 2.67, p = .045$ (Table 2).

Regarding the amount of time each participant devoted to intersentential planning, intrasentential planning, execution, and monitoring (see Table 3), the SFL learners generally demonstrated similar behaviors across languages. No significant differences were found between English and Spanish intersentential planning, intrasentential planning, and execution. However, they devoted more time on average to monitoring in English: $t(5) = 3.66, p = .014$. Additionally,

Table 2. Fluency (word output, mean sentence length, and words per minute) and accuracy for each SFL participant

Participant	Word output		Mean sentence length		Words per minute		Accuracy (% error-free T-units)	
	English	Spanish	English	Spanish	English	Spanish	English	Spanish
Anna	109	58	21.80	11.60	20.31	11.60	80	25
Anthony	208	181	23.11	18.10	22.32	24.91	67	10
Dan	104	69	20.60	13.60	32.93	13.06	60	0
Jennifer	94	58	15.67	11.60	10.03	14.38	100	20
John	143	72	20.29	11.83	24.10	9.19	57	33
Tania	95	58	31.33	9.33	17.01	9.46	33	60
Mean	125.50	82.67**	22.13	12.68*	21.12	13.77	66.17	24.72*
SD	44.20	48.57	5.16	2.98	7.62	5.82	22.62	20.83
Range	114.00	123	15.66	8.77	22.90	15.72	67	60

* $p < .05$
** $p < .01$

the participants performed significantly more surface revisions in Spanish than in English, both in terms of the number of revisions and time spent on them (see Table 4). On average, they performed 8.33 (SD = 1.75) surface revisions in Spanish but only 5.50 (SD = 1.87) in English: $t(5) = 3.78, p = .013$. Likewise, they spent an average of 0.07 (SD = 0.01) minutes performing surface revisions in Spanish compared to 0.05 (SD = 0.02) in English: $t(5) = 4.18, p = .009$. No significant differences were found for meaning revisions, both in terms of the number of revisions and the amount of time spent on them.

Table 3. Time in minutes devoted to execution, inter- and intra-sentential planning, and monitoring in both languages for each SFL participant

Participant	Execution time		Intersentential planning time		Intrasentential planning time		Monitoring time	
	English	Spanish	English	Spanish	English	Spanish	English	Spanish
Anna	3.18	2.27	0.50	0.62	0.73	1.80	0.95	0.32
Anthony	6.06	5.96	0.37	0.37	2.52	0.63	0.38	0.31
Dan	2.63	2.46	0.30	0.87	0.18	1.90	0.04	0.06
Jennifer	2.27	2.07	0.63	0.18	5.13	1.65	1.36	0.13
John	4.49	3.74	0.37	1.37	0.80	2.35	0.28	0.38
Tania	3.30	3.63	1.62	0.42	0.57	1.50	0.10	0.59
Mean	3.66	3.36	0.63	0.64	1.65	1.64	0.52*	0.30
SD	1.40	1.46	0.50	0.43	1.88	0.57	0.52	0.19
Range	3.79	3.89	1.32	1.18	4.94	1.72	1.32	0.53

* $p < .05$

Comparison of SHL and SFL Composition Behaviors

In regard to time allocation, fluency, and accuracy for SFL and SHL learners (see Table 5), the SFL learners behaved similarly to their SHL classmates in terms of several characteristics. There were no significant differences between the two learner groups with regard to English execution time, intersentential planning, intrasentential planning, word output, mean T-unit length, words-per-minute rate, and accuracy. Likewise, when writing in Spanish, the groups had similar means for Spanish execution time, intrasentential planning, monitoring, word output, and words-per-minute rate. However, there were differences between the writing processes and behaviors of the two learner groups. The SHL learners spent significantly more time planning between sentences in Spanish than the SFL learners: $t(16) = 2.15, p = .047$. They also wrote significantly longer Spanish T-units than their SFL peers: $t(16) = 2.40, p = .029$. With regard to accuracy, SHL learners' Spanish compositions contained a significantly higher percentage of error-free T-units than those of their SFL peers: $t(16) = 2.66, p = .017$.

Table 6 presents the numbers and percentages of errors in various categories for both groups of learners, and Figure 1 presents these data visually. The overall error rate for each group was similar: 4.4% for SHL learners and 4.7% for SFL learners. The groups also had similar error percentages on missing words, number agreement, *ser/estar*, and wrong tense (see Table 6). However, there were differences across the subcategories of errors. For example, SFL learners committed more errors with personal *a*, lexical problems, and verb agreement than SHL learners (see Table 6 and Figure 1). SHL learners, on the other hand, committed more errors in mood selection, missing words, and orthography than their SFL peers.

Table 4. Number of SFL surface and meaning revisions and time allocated to them (in minutes)

	English						Spanish			
	Surface revision			Meaning revision			Surface revision		Meaning revision	
	Number	Time	Total number revisions	Number	Time	Total number revisions	Number	Time	Number	Time
Mean	5.50*	0.05*		2.17	0.27	7.67	8.33	0.07	1.83	0.23
Standard Deviation	1.87	0.02		1.47	0.33	2.94	1.75	0.01	2.56	0.19
Range	5.00	0.04		4.00	0.90	7.00	4.00	0.13	7.00	0.40

*p < .05

Table 5. Mean time allocation (in minutes), fluency, and accuracy measures for SFL and SHL participants (standard deviations are in parentheses)

Feature	SFL learners		SHL learners	
	English	Spanish	English	Spanish
Execution time	3.66 (1.40)	3.36 (1.46)	3.10 (1.17)	2.99 (1.07)
Intersentential planning time	0.63 (0.50)	0.64 (0.43)	0.79 (0.24)	1.28* (0.65)
Intrasentential planning time	1.65 (1.88)	1.64 (0.57)	1.67 (0.78)	1.73 (0.75)
Monitoring time	0.52 (0.52)	0.30 (0.19)	1.50* (1.30)	0.93 (1.05)
Surface revision time	0.05 (0.02)	0.07 (0.01)	0.03 (0.02)	0.04* (0.02)
Meaning revision time	0.27 (0.33)	0.23 (0.19)	1.18* (1.24)	0.66 (0.85)
Number surface revisions	5.50 (1.87)	8.33 (1.75)	4.00 (1.86)	4.67* (2.23)
Number meaning revisions	2.17 (1.47)	1.83 (2.56)	9.08* (5.35)	8.83* (3.79)
Word output	125.50 (44.20)	82.67 (48.57)	135.33 (30.48)	119.59 (41.28)
Mean length of T-unit	22.13 (5.16)	12.68 (2.98)	19.37 (2.80)	17.21* (4.09)
Words per minute	21.12 (7.62)	13.77 (5.82)	19.96 (2.80)	17.61 (6.11)
Accuracy (% error-free T-units)	66.17 (22.62)	24.72 (20.83)	76.99 (16.56)	57.01* (25.67)

* $p < .05$

Furthermore, the categories that were the most problematic for each group differed as well. SHL learners' most frequent errors were within the category of orthography (26.98%), whereas SFL learners had more difficulties with lexical problems (37.25%).

The SHL learners spent more time monitoring in English ($M = 1.50$, $SD = 1.30$) than the SFL learners ($M = 0.52$, $SD = 0.52$): $t(16) = 2.26$, $p = .038$. Within monitoring, they made

Table 6. Error count for SHL and SFL learners in spanish (percentages of whole are in parentheses and do not add to 100 due to rounding)

Category	SHL	SFL
Canonical gender agreement	6 (9.52%)	6 (11.76%)
Lexical problem	14 (22.22%)	19 (37.25%)
Number agreement	3 (4.76%)	3 (5.88%)
Wrong mood	7 (11.11%)	1 (1.96 %)
Ser/estar	1 (1.58%)	1 (1.96%)
Verb agreement	1 (1.58%)	3 (5.88%)
Verb aspect	1 (1.58%)	0 (0%)
Wrong tense	1 (1.58%)	1 (1.96%)
Orthography	17 (26.98%)	5 (9.8%)
Extra words	3 (4.76%)	0 (0%)
Missing words	8 (12.69%)	6 (11.76%)
Missing personal <i>a</i>	1 (1.58%)	5 (9.8%)
Total number of errors	63 (100%)	51 (100%)
Total number of words	1425	1084



Figure 1. Error percentages for SHL and SFL learners in Spanish

significantly more English revisions in total (surface + meaning), an average of 13.08, compared to the SFL mean of 7.67: $t(16) = 2.23$, $p = .041$. Regarding English meaning revisions, SHL learners made significantly more of these than their SFL peers— $t(16) = 3.07$, $p = .007$ —and spent significantly more time on them: $t(13.67) = 2.35$, $p = .034$ (see Table 5).³ However, SHL and SFL learners performed similarly with regard to the number of surface revisions in English and time spent on them. Regarding revisions in Spanish, the SFL learners made significantly more surface revisions— $t(16) = 3.51$, $p = .003$ —and spent more time on them: $t(16) = 3.68$, $p = .002$. Conversely, the SHL learners made significantly more meaning revisions in Spanish than the SFL learners: $t(16) = 4.06$, $p = .001$. In terms of time spent on meaning revisions and also the total number of revisions (surface + meaning) in Spanish, the learner groups behaved similarly.

Discussion

The first research question compared various aspects of the English and Spanish writing of SFL learners. The SFL learners wrote significantly more fluently in English than in Spanish, as measured by number of words produced overall and mean length of T-units. Although the difference across languages in words produced per minute (also a measure of fluency) was not statistically significant, the rate for English was slightly higher. SFL learners also wrote significantly more accurately in English than in Spanish. These results reflect that the SFL writers were more proficient in their L1 than their L2, which is not surprising for learners enrolled in a third-year Spanish language course. Future evaluations of composition content may determine whether the SFL group's L2 accuracy and fluency hindered the transfer of the L1 ability to the L2 (Cumming 1989; Sasaki and Hirose 1996).

Despite being less proficient and fluent in their L2, SFL learners allocated similar amounts of time to inter- and intrasentential planning and execution in both languages, which seems to contradict previous L2 research (Cumming 1989; Sasaki and Hirose 1996). Regarding monitoring

and the number of revisions, the participants made significantly more surface revisions in Spanish than in English, and allotted more time to those revisions, but spent more time monitoring in English overall. Results confirm Whalen and Ménard's (1995) finding that learners made a greater number of revisions in the L2 and fewer, but more extensive, ones in the L1.

The second research question involved comparing English and Spanish composition processes and outcomes between SFL learners and SHL learners. Both groups of learners shared similar cross-linguistic tendencies. For example, both groups created significantly longer T-units and demonstrated significantly higher accuracy in English than in Spanish (Mikulski and Elola 2011). Intrasentential planning and execution behaviors did not vary across languages for both groups (Mikulski and Elola 2011). However, the SHL learners spent significantly more time planning between sentences in Spanish than in English (Mikulski and Elola 2011), whereas SFL learners devoted similar amounts of time to intersentential planning across languages. It is possible that the SHL learners' additional experience with the Spanish language has given them more linguistic resources and that they therefore spend more time choosing exactly how to express their thoughts at the sentence level. Although more research is needed to explain this difference, this hypothesis is consistent with Schwartz's (2003, 2005) finding that SHL learners frequently orally rehearse what they want to express before writing it.

SHL and SFL learners behaved similarly in terms of several composition processes in Spanish. When composing in English, they also behaved similarly in regard to planning, execution, fluency, and accuracy. The similarities in English are not surprising given that all participants had spent a substantial amount of time in the US K–12 education system, with exposure to English language arts courses. Indeed, given the many cross-linguistic similarities, SFL and SHL learners likely are transferring some of their English language composition behaviors to Spanish.

This study, however, found some contrasts between the two groups. For example, SFL learners wrote less fluently (measured in shorter T-units) when writing in Spanish, perhaps because SFL learners have had less exposure to Spanish than their SHL peers. The issue of accuracy was more complex. SHL learners had a significantly higher percentage of error-free T-units than their SFL classmates. However, their overall error rate (number of errors divided by the number of words) was similar. When looking at the learners' errors by category, SHL learners had more issues with orthography, missing words (for example, absence of definite articles, such as *Hombres* instead of *Los hombres*) and mood selection than their SFL classmates (SFL learners did not include sentences that required the subjunctive mood in their texts). Compared to SHL learners, SFL learners had a higher percentage of errors with lexical problems, canonical gender, number and verb agreement categories, and omission of the personal *a*. The error patterns confirm the previous research with regard to orthography, gender agreement, and missing words (Bowles 2011; Montrul, Foote and Perpiñan 2008), but they also contradict the idea that SHL learners have issues with agreement of verb tense and aspect morphology (Montrul 2011) and omitting personal *a* (Montrul and Sánchez-Walker 2013). However, it is important to consider not only the differences in tasks and methodology but also the population. These learners came from areas near the Mexican border with active Hispanic communities, whereas other studies may have taken place in different sociolinguistic contexts.

On average, the SFL learners spent almost identical amounts of time on intersentential planning in both English and Spanish. In contrast, the SHL learners spent slightly more time planning between sentences in English than the SFL learners, and their intersentential planning time was significantly longer in Spanish than in English (Mikulski and Elola 2011). It is not clear why SFL learners spent less time planning between sentences in Spanish than their SHL classmates. Possible explanations include individual differences and use of the SHL learners' time to compose more accurate sentences and/or longer, more complex sentences because they have higher proficiency, in keeping with Roca de Larios et al.'s (2008) findings. Nevertheless, future research could incorporate introspective methodology, such as think-aloud protocols, to provide more insight into exactly how SHL and SFL learners use planning time.

Regarding revision behaviors, SFL learners performed more surface revisions in Spanish than in English. This tendency may be attributable to their relative lack of experience in Spanish, a factor that may lead them to change spelling or morphosyntax to improve accuracy. Likewise, the SHL learners also performed more surface revisions in Spanish than English; perhaps the greater morphosyntactic richness of the Spanish language (e.g., gender agreement, verb morphology) may result in more attention to surface revisions for both learner groups. Compared to their SHL peers, SFL learners performed more Spanish surface revisions and allocated more time to them. Perhaps the SHL learners were simply more predisposed to making meaning revisions, given that they spent more time revising for meaning than their SFL peers in both languages.

Implications

Findings depict SFL learners as writers whose composition processes, accuracy, and fluency are largely similar to those of SHL learners enrolled in the same course. Similarities between groups and across languages may be the result of the instruction received in English writing courses that the learners have previously taken. Thus, communication across FL and L1 English writing disciplines could be beneficial (Costino and Hyon 2011) in helping Spanish instructors decide how to use classroom time for writing instruction in SFL, SHL, or mixed SHL–SFL courses.

The differences found between learner groups support the notion that institutions should offer SHL and SFL separate sequences (Mikulski and Elola 2011; Valdés 1997). Even with separate sequences at the elementary and intermediate levels, instructors in upper-division mixed SHL–SFL courses may still need to differentiate instruction for each group of learners. However, because both groups devoted similar amounts of time to intrasentential planning, execution, and monitoring, and displayed similar fluency across groups, both learner groups can benefit from activities that develop fluency and accuracy and encourage them to plan and monitor their writing.

Students in mixed SHL–SFL courses can practice intersentential planning by developing an outline before composing and later contrasting it with the text as a means to better organize their responses, choose vocabulary or register, and rehearse wording; this strategy could be especially helpful to SFL learners who have less experience speaking and listening in Spanish. Another strategy is oral rehearsal (e.g., Schwartz 2003, 2005): SHL learners in particular can be encouraged to consider how their wording “sounds” to them as they plan a sentence, either by rehearsing aloud or using inner speech to foster revision strategies, self-reflection, and self-assessment.

Frequent, low-stakes writing assignments, as suggested by Colombi (2009) can build fluency in both learner groups and target errors that are common to both groups. Also, instructors can differentiate instruction by working on issues that present challenges for each group (e.g., SHL learners can focus on orthography while SFL learners practice the personal *a*).

Finally, it is important to highlight the importance of proofreading and meaning revision. When writing in Spanish, SFL learners performed more surface revisions than their SHL classmates, but SHL learners performed more meaning revisions. By writing and revising collaboratively in SHL–SFL pairs, learners can benefit from each other’s knowledge and writing behaviors (Bowles 2011). Hence, the mixed SHL–SFL classroom offers an environment in which learners can learn from each other with revision.

Limitations

Like other research, the present study has limitations. First, the time limit required participants to produce responses within 30 minutes, which may have affected their composition

behaviors (e.g., less time to revise). Future studies could focus on one composition at a time without time constraints. Second, *Camtasia* offers little insight into the rationale behind writing processes. Therefore, adding verbal protocols such as think-aloud (Schwartz 2003, 2005; Yanguas and Lado 2012) could offer further insights not only into writing processes but also into whether they occurred simultaneously, as Kellogg (1996) suggested. Third, although counting error-free T-units is a widely used and generally reliable method to assess accuracy (e.g., Polio 2007), this method does not consider the severity of errors or distinguish between a T-unit with a single error and another that might contain multiple errors (Polio 1997). Future studies could evaluate accuracy in multiple ways. Subsequent research could also assess the content of the learners' writing in English and Spanish to provide insights into 1) the relationships between content, fluency, accuracy, and time allocation and 2) the degree of cross-linguistic transfer of characteristics such as organization and cohesion.

Other limitations included the focus on one genre, which minimized the multiple genre effect but also limited the findings; the small sample (6 SFL and 12 SHL participants); a focus on learners in a third-year course; lack of a baseline proficiency assessment; and lack of detailed information learners' experiences in English composition classes. Future research should focus on other genres, collect data from more participants at all levels of instruction, and ask about previous writing experiences in greater depth to provide a fuller understanding of SHL and SFL writing behaviors.

Conclusion

This study revealed similarities and differences between the composing behaviors of SFL and SHL learners by analyzing their writing processes and products (i.e., final texts). Both groups share some writing process behaviors in English and are able to transfer some of their English language writing processes to Spanish in areas such as execution, intrasentential planning, and monitoring. Proficiency in the language appears to affect not only accuracy and fluency but also planning at the intersentential level and revision behaviors. An improved understanding of SHL and SFL learners' writing processes and outcomes (i.e., accuracy and fluency) will offer insights into the cross-linguistic transfer of writing skills and inform the creation of activities to improve the composition performance of both groups.

NOTES

¹ One learner did not speak Spanish at home, but was classified as an SHL learner because she had grown up listening to other household members speak Spanish (Mikulski and Elola 2011).

² The notion of error can be somewhat problematic when discussing SHL learners because they may follow some norms from their speech communities that differ from the norms of prestige varieties (e.g., using the word *troca* instead of *camión* for 'truck' or regularizing irregular preterit forms). However, none of the SHL errors or lexical variation appeared to stem from the use of a speech community norm. Lexical errors only included the use of an inappropriate part of speech (e.g., the use of *emocionalmente* instead of *emocionante*).

³ Because of a significant result on Levene's test, equal variances for the learner groups could not be assumed. Consequently, an adjusted t-test was used, which did not assume equal variances.

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Juan Ruiz de Alarcón: Impairment as Empowerment in Early Modern Spain



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Abstract: Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, a seventeenth-century writer and native of New Spain, so excelled at the craft of writing *comedias* that he is recognized as one of the great writers of early modern Spain. In his personal life Ruiz de Alarcón struggled with a significant bodily impairment, a large hump on both his back and front, which made him the target of much attention and scorn from his fellow writers and others in society. No journals or letters exist that document his personal life or attitudes toward his impairment. However, disability theory opens a way to explore the woven fabric of Ruiz de Alarcón's life and works. Both the themes and the characters in his popular *comedias* trace how his embodiment and experiences influenced his depiction of imperfections. Three of his seventeenth-century *comedias*, *Las paredes oyen*, *La prueba de las promesas*, and *Examen de maridos*, address different aspects of imperfection in both direct and indirect ways.

Keywords: comedy/comedia, disability/disabilidad, Golden Age/siglo de Oro, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Spain/España

Juan Ruiz de Alarcón came to the *comedia* with a keen and educated mind, the perspective of having been born and raised in New Spain, and a body with a serious and undeniable physical impairment. This unique combination of intellect, origin, and disability empowered him to complicate for his readers and audiences the idea of perfection, or *lo ideal*, in Peninsular Spanish society. The upper levels of Spanish society in early modern Spain were driven by the twin goals of bodily perfection and spiritual perfection, which affected the lives of both men and women. Ruiz de Alarcón assumed a rhetorical stance in his *comedias* that laid bare the foibles of Spanish society: he observed from his position of isolation, which was caused by not having a perfect body, not having an impressive lineage, and not being born in Spain. It will be the task of this article to explore the woven fabric of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's life and trace how his life and experiences influenced his depiction of *defectos* in three of his seventeenth century *comedias*: *Las paredes oyen*, *La prueba de las promesas*, and *Examen de maridos*. Examples from these three *comedias* will demonstrate the ways in which his own impairment and social standing empowered him to challenge the attitudes of his time about human imperfection.¹

The word "impairment" will be used in this article to refer to the bodily manifestation of Ruiz de Alarcón as a hunchback. On the other hand, "disability" will be used as a description of the ways in which society limits or restricts Ruiz de Alarcón's activities (Albrecht 11). Use of these two terms will ensure a holistic approach, which will encompass his physical presence, his lineage, and his place in a stratified Spanish society.

The term "embodiment" infers that we are whole beings, with all of our differences; in other words, both our identity and our actions are enfolded within the concept of embodiment. Psychologists are beginning to explore just how our mind and body work together to combine our physical and mental perceptions, in a relatively new field called embodied cognition. Theorists note that studying embodiment leads to "understanding how our behavior emerges

from the real-time interplay of task-specific resources distributed across the brain, body, and environment, coupled together via our perceptual systems" (Wilson and Golonka 1). We will see that Ruiz de Alarcón's own embodiment and life experiences had a direct and integral effect on his literary works because he lived with an imperfect body in a society that was constantly striving to achieve *lo ideal*.

The Spanish word *defecto* (or *defeto*) can be interpreted in several different ways. In the writing of early modern Spain, *defecto* was used to refer to either a physical or moral imperfection, as well as such imperfections as style or quality of writing. An example of the word *defecto* used for physical imperfection comes from a letter to Ruiz de Alarcón, dated 19 June 1625. By 1625, Ruiz de Alarcón had been a *pretendiente*, or government-office seeker, for twelve years. King Philip IV's letter detailed the results of an investigation into Ruiz de Alarcón's background and worthiness for a responsible position. While the king indicated satisfaction with Ruiz de Alarcón's personal record, he refused to award him a major post, based on his bodily defects, offering instead, a minor post as interim court reporter:

Y el Conss. ° a tenido siempre satisfazion de sus letras y conocido su talento, y aunque por sus partes era merezedor de que le propusiese á V.M. Para Una plaza de asiento de las Audiencias menores, lo a dexado de hazer, por el defeto Corporal que tiene el qual es grande para la autoridad que a menester representar en cosa semexante. (Fernández-Guerra y Orbe 523)

In another use of the word *defecto*, Lope de Vega apologizes for his defects in the prologue to "Los esclavos libres," "Yo no pido a V.m. que dé luz en mi escuridad, sino que ampare en mi defecto, para decir con Euripides: Jupiter mihi auxiliator, non metuo. Capitán de V. M. Lope de Vega Carpio" (397).² This quote demonstrates that *defecto* could refer to a range of imperfections, large and small. The word *defecto* in this quote could be interpreted in two different ways, either as an expression of humility by Lope de Vega, or as a statement of frustration with not having achieved perfection in the art of writing.

Ruiz de Alarcón was a hunchback, whose spinal column was twisted in such a way as to create a hump on both his chest and his back. There are no verified portraits of him, but we do have descriptions from some of his fellow writers. Willard King includes this description of Ruiz de Alarcón, "Era pelirrojo y de baja estatura, aunque no tan baja que pareciera enano. Si hemos de dar fe a quienes lo conocieron, ya adulto, en Sevilla y en Madrid, tenía un temperamento extrovertido y vivaracho y era amigo de las fiestas" (61).

Francisco de Quevedo similarly provided a caricature of Ruiz de Alarcón in his extensive *letrilla*, "De D. Francisco de Quevedo contra D. Juan de Alarcón."³

¿Quién es don Tal Tolondrones,
de paréntesis formado,
un hombre en quien se ha juntado
semblea de burujones?
¿Quién tiene con lamparones
pecho, lado y espaldilla?
Corcovilla. (King 250)

The example above is one of twenty-one stanzas, which all point out Ruiz de Alarcón's numerous corporeal defects. Satirical works aimed at a fellow author were not unusual in the Golden Age; it is easy to find numerous examples of barbs aimed at other writers. King explains the literary atmosphere in Madrid, "La vida de los escritores en una capital tan chica, donde todo el mundo conocía a todo el mundo, era una red de enemistades y rivalidades" (167). Esther Bartolomé Pons remarks on Quevedo's style: "Fue Quevedo el más duro, terrible y despiadado autor satírico de la España de su tiempo" (4).⁴ A further example of a Golden Age satirical writer is Cristóbal Suárez

de Figueroa, who launched many attacks on his fellow authors, including Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Ruiz de Alarcón, finding fault with their physical bearing, writing, and lineage. Enrique Suárez Figaredo, in his edition of Suárez de Figueroa's *Pasajero*, underscores "su espíritu crítico respecto a la sociedad de su tiempo, las nada cordiales relaciones que mantuvo con sus colegas (en particular con Alarcón) y la antipatía que sentía hacia Cervantes." In addition, it should be noted that not all satirical pieces focused on Ruiz de Alarcón's impairment; critics also found his personality and lineage lacking (Castro Leal 41; King 167)⁵.

Ruiz de Alarcón refused to be a passive victim of satirical pieces, and his responses were both direct and indirect. For example, he replied to Quevedo with his own work, "Respuesta de D. Juan de Alarcón contra D. Francisco de Quevedo" in which he refers to Quevedo as *Pata Coja*, or *lame foot* (King 254). Castro Leal commented on Ruiz de Alarcón's responses to the criticism, "La forma en que responde a algunos de los desenfadados ataques de los mejores ingenios del tiempo, revela nobleza de espíritu y aun cierta conmiseración por sus agresores" (18). One of his responses to the barrage of criticism his embodiment caused was to embed his perspective in the characters and plot of his *comedias*.

In addition to Ruiz de Alarcón's physical impairment, which caused much of his disability in negotiating Spanish society, he also endured alienation because he was a *criollo*, a son born in the New World, of Spanish parents. *Criollos* were considered second to native-born Spaniards, in most instances, with regard to job-seeking or court positions. Also, Ruiz de Alarcón's lineage was in question, as King explains, "con base en rumores insistentemente recogidos en varias pruebas de limpieza de sangre de comienzos del siglo XVII" (235). Rumors reported that the bones of one of his ancestors, Violante González, were disinterred and burned in 1491 as punishment for Judaizing. King disproved those rumors in 1970 (235). However, from the point of view of early modern Spanish society, Ruiz de Alarcón suffered from multiple imperfections, or defects: physical impairment, place of origin, and suspicious lineage, all of which created barriers for his acceptance and integration. He encountered all around him a society that was striving for physical and spiritual perfection. His very nature was in opposition to the concept of *lo ideal*.

Living in early modern Spanish society with such a visible deformity, he was regarded as grotesque and far from *lo ideal* demanded of upper class men and women. Henri Stiker explores human reactions to difference in *A History of Disability*. He notes that rejection of difference relates directly to our understanding of what is *normal*, and what relationship to the norm we have been culturally trained to accept. When someone does not fit into our concept of normal, it creates a disconnect, or, as Stiker phrases it, a "tear in our being. . . . The visceral nature of this 'tear' reveals the extent of our investment in the fantasy of the normal" (viii). Wherever Ruiz de Alarcón went, his impairment was so obvious that he challenged the early modern Spanish understanding of what a human body should look like. Elena Del Río Parra, in her examination of the representation of deformity in Golden Age Spain, highlights a connection between people's fears and the sight of deformity, "La mirada del sujeto callejero sobre lo horrible del monstruo como objeto no solo deshumaniza y comercializa, sino que también confirma el peligro de lo natural, lo ignoto de la naturaleza, y los límites de lo humano" (127). Del Río Parra uses the term *monstruo* to cover many categories of deformity, including the hunchback. In addition, Otis Green suggests that people of early modern Spain recognized a connection between the bodily manifestation of impairment and lack of intelligence, or, even a soul (101–02). The more invested in *lo ideal* a person was, the less likely that person would accept Ruiz de Alarcón as a peer.

Early modern Spanish society was marked by constant monitoring and being monitored, by judging and being judged. People were analyzed and weighed for their performance of gender, wealth, bloodlines, relative attractiveness, adherence to the Catholic faith, honor, and position in society. Since literature often serves to reflect society, these themes can be found throughout the literary production of the era. According to Georgina Dopico Black, "It almost seems redundant now to point out that in early modern Spain bodies—and bloodlines—were

quite literally read for Otherness" (58). Fray Luis de León, in considering the vocation of the perfect married woman, reveals a bias about impairment, saying that often in nature, creatures born with significant disabilities do not live: "y como la naturaleza aborrece los monstruos, así Dios huye éstos y los abomina" (9). While Fray Luis was speaking about natural selection, analysis reveals an abhorrence for imperfection that could and did carry over into daily life in early modern Spain. J. H. Elliott echoes the same observation in "The Imposition of Orthodoxy," "Suspicion of those who deviated from the common norm was deeply rooted in a country where deviation was itself more normal than elsewhere—and a man could be suspect for his race as well as his faith" (220).

Lennard Davis in "Constructing Normalcy," notes that "literature does not require a theme of disability, or even disabled characters in order to make a statement about disability, even in texts that do not appear to be about disability, the issue of normalcy is fully deployed" (17). He traces the term *norm* from its beginnings in Europe during the 1800s (6–7). People in early modern Europe did not think in terms of average or normal, but in terms of the ideal, or *lo ideal*, comparing themselves and others to a social construction of perfection (4). Cristian Berco connects the Spanish goal of spiritual and bodily perfection in his discussion of the Virgin Mary, "After all, medieval and early modern notions of beauty intimately connected the state of the soul with outward appearance. Consider, for instance, the common insistence that the Virgin Mary lacked any physical imperfections" (231). Since she was both sinless and perfect, her ideal state both influenced and inspired her followers. Berco continues, "Such a premium placed on outward appearance and how it was read in social situations reflected broader trends in early modern society that conceptualised the visible body as central to status and reputation" (238). Ruiz de Alarcón, situated in a substantially tangential relationship to society in early modern Spain, used his considerable talent to criticize society's constant search for *lo ideal*.

The three plays by Ruiz de Alarcón considered here call into question the relationship between imperfections and love, between imperfections and honor, and between imperfections and friendship. Juan Ruiz de Alarcón most certainly experienced all of the nuances of impairment: rejection, scorn, alienation, as well as acceptance, friendship, and love. Although he was, at some level, answering his critics through the power of his pen, it is evident that his intent went far beyond revenge. He was teaching a lesson in how to treat one another, in what is and is not important, and how to walk away from *lo ideal*.

Although we do not know his intentions for using *defectos* as a catalyst for action in some of his plays, we can hypothesize about his purpose and effect. His *comedias* do not feature characters with severe disabilities such as his own, but several are concerned with a variety of minor *defectos*, such as ugliness or bad breath. It is statistically certain that few people in the Golden Age audience of nobles and commoners were hunchbacks. However, many were aware of their own shortcomings as well as those of others in society. By emphasizing minor flaws instead of major physical disabilities, Ruiz de Alarcón fashioned characters who reflected the prevalent attitudes of the time and related to the audience by portraying lives affected in serious ways by minor flaws. A male hunchback onstage would not have had the same effect on the audience, for he would have elicited disgust, rejection, pity, or scorn from an audience trained to be aware of such physical anomalies. This outright dismissal would have completely negated any mission on the part of Ruiz de Alarcón to enlighten his audience about the relative unimportance of *defectos*. Jules Whicker discusses the "persuasive medium" (38) of the *comedia*, noting its power to appeal to the senses and the imagination, and to lead the audience into such an altered state that their minds would be open for a moral lesson, or, as its detractors might say, that they might be misled. In the plays of Ruiz de Alarcón considered here, the *defectos* function as metaphors, which teach about the qualities of human life that really matter. The characters in these *comedias* choose not to rely on *defectos* to determine their relationships, and this choice opens a fresh, new way of seeing the world for an audience that has relied on *lo ideal* as the measure.

The embodiment of impairment has taken innumerable forms through time. We have much to learn from narratives of people from the past who present the varied faces of impairment and disability. We can explore space and time through their stories, listening for ways in which they connect us to human experience. Philip Sandblom, a physician with a strong interest in the arts, completed a study of creativity and disease, looking at the connection between artists with impairments and their artistic production. He concluded that the connections are “close and common” (15), and that many artists have “been influenced by disease” (21). Sandblom discusses Thomas Mann’s theory of illness, for example. In “Dostoevsky in Moderation,” Thomas Mann suggests that illness is not necessarily a negative:

In other words, certain attainments of the soul and intellect are impossible without disease, without insanity, without spiritual crime, and the great invalids are crucified victims, sacrificed to humanity and its advancement, to the broadening of its feeling and knowledge—in short to its more sublime health. (xv)

Sandblom theorizes that impairment or illness can have a positive effect on creativity by providing unfettered time, or by offering a unique view on human interaction. For Ruiz de Alarcón, it seems the combination of his natural impairment and the social milieu that caused his disability provided him with a unique perspective on artificiality and artifice, or *lo ideal* in Spanish society.

Tobin Siebers discusses personal identity in *Disability Theory* and problematizes the ways in which society and identity commingle and co-create:

Thus, identity is not the structure that creates a person’s pristine individuality or inner essence but the structure by which that person identifies and becomes identified with a set of social narratives, ideas, myths, values, and types of knowledge of varying reliability, usefulness, and verifiability. (15)

This view of identity encourages acceptance of individuals as not only a body and a mind, but also a body and a mindset within a culture or society. Jack Reynolds, in *Merleau-Ponty and Derrida: Intertwining Embodiment and Alterity* notes that Maurice Merleau-Ponty observes that a balance must be achieved and emphasizes the need to establish equilibrium between body, mind, and society (Reynolds 89). Gareth Williams, in “Theorizing Disability,” stresses the importance of the interplay between impairment and the social environment: “Theorizing disability is not merely about abstractly conceptualizing the relationships between impairment and situations—it is about how those relationships work for people in dynamic and complex personal and social processes” (132). In *Handbook of Disability Studies*, Gary Albrecht accentuates the importance of context: “In fact, we cannot fully understand the place of disability in society unless we analyze images across time, space, and context” (4). Thus, understanding the context is crucial; a person exists in the parameters of his or her own special experience and time. The approaches are many, as Albrecht notes, “Disability is both a private and public experience. For some, disability represents a personal catastrophe to be avoided if at all possible, a shameful condition to be denied or hidden if present and negotiated within the sanctuary of one’s family and personal space” (1–2). Ruiz de Alarcón could not enter a room without immediate recognition of his impairment; his body was unmistakably public. But at the same time, he was a part of the social process. His special challenge was to use his intellect and his context to confront the attitudes of early modern Spain, and to contrast *lo ideal* with the virtues of human existence in their varied forms.

In Ruiz de Alarcón’s literary production, there is a search to achieve some sort of equilibrium between his experience of the world and his intellect. Mansoor Fahim, in an overview of the concept of embodiment, points to the connection between embodiment, perception, and cognition: “Each individual explores the world and internalizes the experiences through

perception and formulates the cognition. This can be the fundamental basis for the variety of the perception of . . . [an] external reality by different individuals" (75). Ruiz de Alarcón identified his perceptions of rejection and scorn through his cognition, and applied them to his characters on stage. We find that his *comedias*, although entertaining, at the same time direct us toward a higher moral sense, and especially hold up imperfection as a prism for us to see its many sides. Rodolfo Usigli, in his study of Ruiz de Alarcón, for example, highlighted five moral lessons in his plays: pardon of injuries, charity for imperfections, virtue of the promise, spiritual action above physical, and punishment of the lie and disloyalty (11). Out of the five lessons mentioned by Usigli, it is notable that three involve the physical in some way. Lola Josa notes that Ruiz de Alarcón's intention for his plays went beyond entertainment, to reveal a moral sense, "Y más siendo como es un autor dramático interesado en ofrecer con su arte una propuesta de reforma social, no institucionalmente hablando, sino en el plano de una moral individual" (216). Therefore, the *comedia*, in Ruiz de Alarcón's capable hands, became an instrument that could not only amuse but also instruct his audiences and his peers.

At the same time, Ruiz de Alarcón problematizes the idea of defects or faults and the importance they should play in society's vision of *lo ideal*. We will see in the discussion below that a disability reading of three of Ruiz de Alarcón's *comedias* will yield some different perspectives on defects in early modern Spain. Ruiz de Alarcón only wrote one play, *Las paredes oyen*, in which a central character is impaired or deformed. He wrote this *comedia* in 1617, partially as a reply to his critics. The central figure, Don Juan de Mendoza, describes himself in the first scene:

DON JUAN: ¿cómo podrán
dar esperanza al deseo
de un hombre tan pobre y feo
y de mal talle, Beltrán? (1.1.9–12)

In Ruiz de Alarcón's *comedias* the characters strive to both present and challenge *lo ideal*. Michael Bérubé, in "Disability and Narrative," calls our attention to the special relationship between disability and literature, noting that literature does not have to be about disability itself, but can bring to light new perceptions when viewed through the lens of disability studies: "Rereading narrative from the perspective of disability studies, then, leads us to reread the role of temporality, causality, and self-reflexivity in narrative, and to reread the implications of characters' self-awareness" (576). In the quotation from *Las paredes oyen*, Don Juan both demonstrates awareness of and criticizes his own embodiment as *pobre*, *feo*, and *mal talle*. He links his outward appearance to lack of hope for love, intimating that only fine-looking men are lucky in love. Don Juan's words echo the Spanish societal standard, which gave more worth to men who were handsome.

Ruiz de Alarcón used part of his own full name, Don Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y Mendoza, for his main character, which leads the reader to suppose that the character of Don Juan might be autobiographical. Eugenia Revueltas also proposes that Ruiz de Alarcón's unusual choice for a *galán* shows a certain amount of rebellion against the status quo of his time, "lo extraordinario de la empresa de don Juan; crear un personaje así, es expresión de una rebelión alarconiana, una sublimación estética de sus más recónditos" (204). Don Juan de Mendoza furthers the connection with Ruiz de Alarcón with those descriptive words, *pobre*, *feo*, and *de mal talle*. Each of the words is evocative of Ruiz de Alarcón's own human experience of poverty and being called ugly and deformed by a number of his contemporaries. Ruiz de Alarcón used the *gracioso* figure, Beltrán, to reassure Don Juan by saying, "Sin riqueza ni hermosura pudieras lograr tu intento" (1.1.53–4). Although Don Juan continues to argue with Beltrán in the same vein, Beltrán steadfastly supports and encourages him, in this case, to pursue Doña Ana, the object of his affection. At the same time, Beltrán both acknowledges Don Juan's poverty and lack of good looks. His character steps out of the social expectation of *lo ideal* and encourages his master to persevere.

In this play Doña Ana de Contreras, a young widow, is the object of Don Juan's affections. Doña Ana, however, loves Don Mendo, a handsome young man who proves to be of suspicious moral character. Don Mendo has a habit of lying about people and ends up telling lies about Doña Ana, saying for example, that he does not really know her and that she is ugly anyway, "la viuda no es tan bella. Ella tiene el cerca feo" (1.18.977–8). Walter Poesse, in *Juan Ruiz de Alarcón* remarks that some scholars believe Don Mendo was based on some of Ruiz de Alarcón's harshest critics (42). In time, Doña Ana learns of Don Juan's love and contemplates loving someone ugly:

DOÑA ANA: Celia, ¡Si don Juan tuviera
mejor talla y mejor cara! . . . (2.4.1540–1)

Her maid, Celia, advises her that beauty is not everything in life, saying:

CELIA: ¡Pues cómo! ¿En eso repara
una tan cuerda mujer?
En el hombre no has de ver
la hermosura o gentileza:
su hermosura es la nobleza,
su gentileza el saber.
Lo visible es el tesoro
de mozas faltas de seso,
y las más veces por eso
topan con un asno de oro. (2.4.1542–51)

The character of Doña Ana's maid, Celia, much like Beltrán, is the voice of wisdom here, urging Doña Ana to look for nobility and intellect over good looks and refinement. She warns that a good-looking, refined person might still be an ass underneath. In other words, a gilded ass is still an ass, and *lo ideal* could be a lie. Celia's words interrogate society's standard of *lo ideal*, and lead Doña Ana toward a new perspective on relationships, one that is based on integrity. Ruiz de Alarcón often used references to classical works, and this line is a clear reference to *The Golden Ass* by Lucius Apuleius.⁶ In Apuleius's story, a character named Lucius accidentally turns himself into an ass and has adventures in animal form. When in animal form, Lucius was not what he seemed to be, and Celia believed Don Mendo was not either.

At the end of *Las paredes oyen*, Don Juan de Mendoza wins over Doña Ana. This is one of Ruiz de Alarcón's early *comedias*, and the one that confronts the reader most directly about the folly of using imperfections as a measure of character. The characters of Don Juan, Don Mendo, and Doña Ana clearly reveal their attitudes and biases about perfection. The concept of *lo ideal* in early modern Spanish society was a measure of the human body, an ideal that could not exist, but nevertheless controlled the perceptions of the general population. In *Las paredes oyen*, Don Juan's body does not meet the ideal of perfection; however, the steadfastness of Don Juan's love and his moral uprightness cause Doña Ana to think beyond her concept of *lo ideal* in order to choose him. This early *comedia* openly challenged the audience to consider its own biases and also highlighted what would become a consistent thread in Ruiz de Alarcón's literary production.

In *La prueba de las promesas*, which some scholars date to about 1618, Ruiz de Alarcón confronts *lo ideal* with an underlying theme of *defectos* that move the action. The use of *defectos* as a literary device is not a technique that originated with Ruiz de Alarcón, but was present in other *comedias* of the time.⁷ However, because his characters' *defectos* often match the very defects he was accused of by his peers, his use of autobiographical elements contrasts his personal reality with the constant striving for perfection that marked the seventeenth-century social landscape.

In *La prueba de las promesas*, Blanca, daughter of Don Illán de Toledo, is in love with Don Juan. Her father wishes her to marry Don Enrique de Vargas to end a long-term feud between

the two families. To deter her interest in Don Juan, he pays her maid, Lucía, to tell Blanca that Don Juan has some serious *defectos*, which Blanca should consider before marrying him. She mentions that he has three false teeth, bad breath, and badly shaped calves. Here are Lucía's words concerning his teeth:

LUCÍA: ¿ves
 aquel hilo de sus dientes
 tan blancos y transparentes?
 ¡Pues son postizos los tres! (1.5.431–4)

In general, Blanca's reaction to Don Juan's supposed defects, is strong. Blanca replies, "¡Jesús!" (1.5.435) to his false teeth. To the fault of "mal olor" she says, "¡Qué gran falta!" (1.5.439–41). Lucía continues by describing his legs:

LUCÍA: Pues, ¿las piernas? . . . Oye.
BLANCA: Dí
LUCÍA: Dice—¡Extrañas maravillas!—
 que cañas las conoció,
 Y sin milagro les dio
 San Felipe pantorrillas. (1.5.445–50)

This reference to San Felipe Neri is meant to be humorous. According to *Catholic Online*, "Philip was known to be spontaneous and unpredictable, charming and humorous" ("St. Philip Neri"). He was known for practical jokes and a comical view of life. Ruiz de Alarcón would have known about Felipe Neri because he was beatified in 1615, shortly before this play was written. The allusion is that if San Felipe had given Don Juan his legs, they would have had an unusual shape. Blanca is shocked to find this about her intended. She comments, "¡Grandes engaños se ven!" (1.5.444).

However, at first, Blanca cannot see beyond these imperfections to the true character of Don Juan. She echoes her society's yearning for *lo ideal*, in this case a handsome lover. In Act Two, Scene Four, Blanca has a long speech in which she muses on her mixed feelings, which she likens to having a counterweight. She uses examples of the good and bad sides of things, like a ship on a clear day contrasted with a night of shadows and terror, or whether a peacock hides deformities under the splendor of its plumage. She then contemplates the *defectos* she has been told that Don Juan has.

si en medio destas glorias,
importunas memorias
de las deformes faltas que imagino
en mi esposo esperado
mezclan acíbar al mejor bocado?" (2.4.1299–303)

Blanca is torn between her love and striving for *lo ideal*, between her emotions and her societal training. Her serious deliberations about Don Juan's *defectos* show that she believes worth and good looks are related, and that perfection should be pursued above all else.

In *La prueba de las promesas*, Ruiz de Alarcón reaches beyond the direct approach he used in *Las paredes oyen*, where the ugly man wins the woman. Here he uses the defects as a literary device to complicate and further the action of the *comedia*. Don Juan's *defectos* give Blanca pause, and complicate her feelings of love. It is Tristán who reveals that they are contrived (3.11.2356–58). The *defectos* recede into the background as Don Illán, Blanca's father, a magician, initiates a spell to make Don Juan and Don Enrique believe that Don Juan has become a Marqués. It is a test to see which man will stay true to his own values, even when tempted with

power and position. The action of the play turns toward a test of integrity, which Don Juan fails when he becomes arrogant and haughty. So, Don Juan loses Blanca in the end, not on account of his supposed physical defects, but because of his own arrogance, pride, and general lack of integrity, as pointed out by Don Illán when the spell is broken (3.19.2696–700). Blanca's struggle over accepting the *defectos* serves as a counterpoint to the more important struggle, that of moral and ethical conviction. From his position on the margins of society, Ruiz de Alarcón was criticizing the nobility for pursuing false values, and for believing that worth lies in physicality, possessions, or power.

Don Enrique, on the other hand, wins Blanca, not because he embodies *lo ideal*, or the perfect masculine figure, but because he consistently takes the higher moral ground. Lucía, Blanca's maid, compares the two lovers. First of all, Don Enrique:

LUCÍA: Dijo que si tu mano no alcanzaba,
ni hábitos no encomiendas estimaba.
Mientras más sube, más humilde adora; (3.10.2259–61)

And then, Don Juan:

LUCÍA: bien otro que el Marqués desvanecido
en quien con el honor crece el olvido. (3.10.2262–63)

In agreement with Don Illán's analysis, Lucía points out that Don Enrique does not value possessions and cultivates humility, where Don Juan has allowed vanity to cloud his vision. From his position outside of *lo ideal*, Ruiz de Alarcón weighs for his audience what is really important in life, in contrast to vain pursuits.

In the interim between *Las paredes oyen* and *La prueba de las promesas*, it is clear that Ruiz de Alarcón refined his art to make his moral points in subtler and more artful ways. His disability perspective in *La prueba de las promesas* leads the audience to conclude that physical defects, real or not real as in this case, are miniscule in comparison with the true virtues of constancy, stability and truthfulness.

Ruiz de Alarcón continued the thread of using false defects in *Examen de maridos*, a delightful *comedia* with a strong female character, Doña Inés, who is looking for a husband. Castro Leal describes *Examen de Maridos* as "Una de las mejores comedias de Alarcón y una de las más ingeniosas y perfectas del teatro clásico español" (182). *Examen de maridos* is possibly the last play that Ruiz de Alarcón wrote; it is dated 1622–3 (Castro Leal 181). Briefly, the play entails an agreement that Doña Inés will marry the winner of a debate between her suitors. A friend, Doña Blanca, spreads the news of false defects to Doña Inés in order to sway Doña Inés's opinion about the Marqués, Don Fadrique. According to Doña Blanca, Don Fadrique has the following indecent faults: he is stupid, but takes a tonic to make himself appear smarter; he has bad breath; he is boastful; and he tells lies. Doña Blanca lets Doña Inés know that the only reason she is telling her this is "el deseo de serviros" (2.3.1136). Inés is then confronted with a struggle similar to Blanca in *La prueba de las promesas*: Should she marry someone she loves even though he has certain defects, or marry someone who is *lo ideal*? She confesses that she loves Don Fadrique, even with all of his supposed faults, "padece algunos defetos / tan graves, aunque secretos" (3.16.2643–4). However, because she cannot solve her dilemma, she agrees to marry the suitor who wins a debate on the topic of marrying someone with or without faults.

The *gracioso* of the play, Ochavo, shares with Doña Inés information he gleaned from some of the suitors, "me han dicho que examenáis / lo visible, y no tratáis / de las partes interiores," (1.11.476–8). Ochavo, wisely, advises Doña Inés to look beyond the physical in order to find the more important and perhaps hidden qualities of the suitors.

In the debate, Don Fadrique argues strongly and eloquently for marrying the ideal man:

MARQUÉS: El amor es quien conserva
 el gusto del casamiento;
 amor nace de hermosura,
 y es hermoso lo perfeto;
 luego debe la Marquesa
 dar la mano a aquel que, siendo
 más perfeto, es más hermoso
 pues haber de amarlo es cierto. (3.16.2702–09)

In his turn, Don Carlos argues that she should marry a suitor, faults and all:

CONDE: Y no importa que el querido
 padezca algunos defetos,
 pues nos advierte el refrán
 castellano que lo feo
 amado parece hermoso,
 y es bastante paracello,
 pues nunca amor se aconseja
 sino con su gusto mesmo. (3.16.2778–85)

Don Carlos wins the debate, but in a last minute plot twist he yields to Don Fadrique. Doña Inés ends up marrying the Marqués Don Fadrique, even with all of his imagined faults.

This play shows a further development in Ruiz de Alarcón's presentation of *defectos*. In *Las paredes oyen*, he draws a strong and clear line; the suitor with *defectos* wins the hand of Doña Ana. This play is a direct challenge to the idea of the importance of *lo ideal* in Spanish thought. There is a subtle shift in *La prueba de las promesas* to show that even perceived faults should not be a deciding factor in whom to marry. Here we are not talking about a truly impaired character, but one who might have faults. In the end, the faults do not come into play at all because the matter is decided on the basis of moral integrity. The idea is that a society, which is focused on *lo ideal* is missing the important virtues of life such as honesty, integrity, and dependability.

Finally, *Examen de maridos* complicates the view of imperfection even further. The question becomes: Should a woman choose to marry a suitor even with all of his faults, or choose an ideal one? The fact is, the faults are not true, which Inés never finds out, but it doesn't actually matter to the action of the play. In *Examen de maridos*, the faults loom large, so large that they become the center of a debate between suitors and become, supposedly, the deciding factor in Inés' choice. Ruiz de Alarcón, however, keeps the suspense of who will marry Inés until the very end, embedding a double twist in the plot. Inés chooses Don Carlos' moral argument as the strongest, that a person's defects should not matter. However, Don Carlos is actually arguing in favor of his friend, Don Fadrique, who has the supposed defects, as he says:

CONDE: Yo, con licencia
 vuestra, en esta diferencia
 defendiendo el que es amado
 debe ser el escogido. (3.16.2670–74)

Don Fadrique argues that a person's defects do matter, and that a woman should choose perfection. Don Fadrique, out of friendship, is actually arguing in favor of Don Carlos, who does not have defects:

MARQUÉS: Pues yo soy
 de contrario parecer,
 y defendiendo que es más justo
 no seguir el propio gusto,
 y al más perfeto escoger. (3.16.2681–5)

Both men demonstrate strong moral character in making their arguments in favor of each other. In the end, Don Carlos proves his friendship by yielding Doña Inés' hand to Don Fadrique. Here Doña Inés ends up with the suitor who supposedly has defects, but she does not choose directly like Doña Ana in *Las paredes oyen*. Interestingly, however, she does choose the winner of the debate whose argument supports the fact that defects should not matter.

In the *comedias* above, characters such as Doña Ana, Doña Inés, Doña Lucía, and their servants function as witnesses whose testimonies challenge the audience's generally held beliefs and preconceived notions about imperfections and *lo ideal*. David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder note the intertwined relationship between literary narrative and disability: "representations of disability, then, allow an interrogation of static beliefs about the body while also erupting as the unseemly matter of narrative that cannot be textually contained" (49). In Ruiz de Alarcón's *comedias*, his characters, as witnesses, refuse to be contained by the framework of drama, and step forward to address misconceptions of embodiment, relationships and *lo ideal*.

As a writer, Ruiz de Alarcón embodied his physical challenges, substantial intellect and societal position whenever he set pen to paper. His very act of writing was a demonstration of his empowerment in early modern Spanish society, a statement that his persona was more than an impaired body. Ruiz de Alarcón did not leave us with journals, personal papers, or reflections on his life. The few extant documents relating to him are academic records, business letters, a will, and several professional resumes, titled *Memorial de servicios*.⁸ It is the characters he left behind, however, who bear witness to the possibilities of a society where persons are accepted and loved for reasons beyond the superficial. Audiences who really listened to their testimonies within the poetic lines of these *comedias*, in addition to being entertained, learned ways in which a society obsessed with *lo ideal* could be transformed. It is also the story of how one man in early modern Spain turned his impairment into empowerment for himself and others.

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NOTES

¹ All quotes from *Las paredes oyen*, *La prueba de las promesas*, and *Examen de maridos* are taken from the *Obras completas* of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón.

² "Jupiter mihi auxiliator, non metuo" means "Jupiter help me, I have no fear."

³ King transcribed this extensive *letrilla* from the Hispanic Society of New York, manuscrito B2492, "poesías de Fermín de Sarasa y Arce," fol. 95r-v (250–54).

⁴ Quevedo also satirized Luis de Góngora y Argote, for the quality of his writing, his lifestyle, his interest in gambling, and even his large nose. This excerpt from "Otra contra el dicho" contrasts Góngora's priesthood with his gambling habit: "Tantos años y tantos todo el día; / menos hombre, más Dios, Góngora hermano. / No altar, garito, sí; poco cristiano, / mucho tahúr; no clérigo, sí arpía" (551).

⁵ Castro Leal likewise lists numerous authors who criticized Ruiz de Alarcón: "Quevedo, Góngora, Mira de Amescua, Castillo y Solórzano, Vélez de Guevara, Pérez de Montalbán, y Salas Barbadillo" (40). Schons cites his likeness to one of the court "enanos," or little people, as one possibility for the reactions he endured from his peers: "Cuando se considera que era muy bajo de estatura y que se parecía mucho a Soplillo, enano de la Reina, no es sorprendente que despertara la risa de sus contemporáneos" (46). Castro Leal notes that much of the satire about Ruiz de Alarcón centered on his spinal disfigurement: "Las sátiras y epigramas contra Alarcón son, generalmente, ingeniosas variaciones sobre el tema de sus corcovas" (40).

⁶ Apuleius (c. 125 CE) lived at the height of the Roman Empire in Northern Africa. *The Golden Ass*, also known as *Metamorphoses*, is a novel based on a Greek fable of a man who becomes an ass through a mistaken magical spell. Apuleius' work, *Metamorphoses*, caught the attention of St. Augustine, who reportedly named the work *The Golden Ass*. St. Augustine reacted strongly to the role of magic in the text.

This text, which is the only extant novel in Latin, greatly influenced the development of subsequent fiction, such as the picaresque and magical realism (Hunink; Harrison).

⁷ Examples of Golden Age plays that incorporate the term *defectos* are: *Amar por burla* (Lope de Vega), *El Rey por trueque* (Lope de Vega), and *La santa Juana* (Tirso de Molina).

⁸ Several scholars have catalogued documents relating to Ruiz de Alarcón. For examples, see the work of Castro Leal, Peña, and Schons.

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Writing Fragments of Modernity: Visual Technology and Metafiction in Pablo Palacio's *Débora* and "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés"



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Abstract: This current study explores the relationship between visual technology (cinema and photography) and a metanarrative preoccupation with the craft of literary narration in two texts by Pablo Palacio (Ecuador, 1906–47). In his novella *Débora* (1927), Palacio employs the language of cinema (e.g., the cinematograph, the cinema, references to film studios, and film plots) to present a story which details the protagonist's fascination with films and foregrounds the narrator's self-reflexivity about the craft of storytelling. In "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" (1927), photography, the *crónica*, and ethical acts of reading, interpreting, and narrating become instruments for the narrator to solve the murder of Ramírez whose death is presumed to be caused by being kicked to death due to his homosexuality. Both texts are thus invested in exploring the complementarity of visual technology and literature as two narrative modes that fragment the fleeting experience of modernity. Ultimately, my reading of Palacio's texts in light of visual technology leads to a reflection on what literature can gain from visual narrative recourses.

Keywords: avant-garde/vanguardia, Ecuadorian literature/literature ecuatoriana, metafiction/metaficción, modernity/modernidad, Pablo Palacio, visual technology/tecnología visual

In Pablo Palacio's avant-garde fiction there is often a fascination for literal and textual fragmentation, which becomes a means for the author to articulate his own views on the process of fiction writing. In his novella *Débora* (1927), the cinematograph and film language shape the characters' development and the metatextual preoccupation with the craft of fiction writing. The appearance of the cinematograph in the novella's epigraph serves as the connecting thread to make sense of the narrator's reflections on writing, as well as the character of Teniente's fascination with films and his desire to fall in love with a woman like those portrayed in movies.

On the other hand, in "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" (1927), Palacio is preoccupied by the relationship between *la crónica*, the newspaper, and photography, which serve as the nameless narrator's only tools for deciphering the murder mystery of Octavio Ramírez. From these visual and written texts, the narrator is able to envision and reconstruct the events and circumstances that led to the murder of Ramírez, who is presumed to be *vicioso*, a euphemism for gay.

The argument of this current study is that Palacio's novella and short story reference the language of visual technology (cinema and photography) to inform a critical reflection on narrative language in early twentieth-century Ecuadorian fiction. Both texts have a metafictional preoccupation with discerning how narrative forms are changing due to the effects of visual technology on modern storytelling sensibilities. On a social level, however, *Débora* and "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" can also be read as commentaries on Ecuador's political militarism, on social mores in the first decades of the twentieth century, as well as on the country's gradual claim to modernity in the advent of technological advances.

Palacio's Writings in Context: Fragmenting Modernity

In relation to the *indigenista* or social realist literature that prevailed in Ecuador during the 1920s and 1930s, literary historiography has often placed Palacio's fiction as an exceptional and isolated instance of literary production (Cassara 31; Robles 143; Ruffinelli 47–51). By other accounts, Palacio's brief literary production, which includes the short story collection *Un hombre muerto a puntapiés* (1927) and his two novellas *Débora* (1927) and *La vida del ahorcado* (1932), has been read within the contexts of avant-garde and urban fiction (Jitrik 299–300; Manzoni 58–62). These framings of Palacio's work must be situated within the historical, political, and economic factors impacting Ecuador in the first decades of the twentieth century. In terms of Ecuador's claim to modernity, the turn of the century marks the growth and modernization of Ecuador's infrastructure, including the railroad, paved roads connecting Quito and Guayaquil, and an attempt to modernize many of the nation's social institutions (Ayala Mora 87–94).

The turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century is a period of turmoil and political transition after Eloy Alfaro (1842–1912), leader of the liberal revolution seeking to modernize Ecuador, was assassinated by a mob of citizens and betrayed by a faction of liberalism (Ramos 35–39). The early decades of the twentieth century mark a transition in politics in which liberalism declines and gives way to modern political parties. This is also a period of economic decline given that cacao, as Ecuador's main export, loses its hold on global markets in the aftermath of World War I and due to the growing economic crisis leading to the Great Depression and its impact on global economy. In turn, in the 1920s two major political factors shape literary production, the first of which is the popular insurrection in Guayaquil in November 1922, leading to a massacre of hundreds of workers and serving as the historical background for Joaquín Gallegos Lara's novel *Las cruces sobre el agua* (1946). The second political event shaping Palacio's fictional writings and those of many of his contemporaries is the *Revolución Juliana* in 1925 in which a coup d'état marks the end of a plutocratic form of liberalism in favor of more egalitarian social policies (Ayala Mora 93–94; Paz y Miño Cepeda 15–17).

Given this context, Palacio's literary production has often been placed in isolation and as an example of avant-garde literature distinct from broadly defined social realism present in the works of his Ecuadorian contemporaries such as Jorge Icaza (1906–78), José de la Cuadra (1903–41), Joaquín Gallegos Lara (1909–47), or Demetrio Aguilera Malta (1909–81). A central concern in this article, however, is to explore the role of visual technology in Palacio's fiction and what it tells us about Palacio's discursive intervention in a broader discussion of Ecuador's modernity. In relation to avant-garde Latin American literatures' engagement with technology, Vicky Unruh observes how "Vanguardist expression reinforces this self-defining image of artists as workers by portraying artistic work with technological or athletic motifs, a poetics of airplanes, automobiles, elevators, bicycles, and trampolines" (80). In Palacio's fiction, references to visual technology do not appear to position the author as a worker per se. Instead, Palacio collapses the longstanding division between manual and intellectual labor by becoming a craftsman of stories and thus revealing how technology shapes narrative sensibilities. Later in the current study, there will be a focus on how cinematic technology's vertiginous changes through the late 1920s permeate Palacio's literary language. At this point, however, the questions become: is Palacio's fiction a discussion of the role of technological novelty in the advent of Ecuador's modernity? Or, are the tropes of visual technology in Palacio's fiction eliciting an exploration of the relationship between storytelling and visual media's effects on narrative fiction? Fernando J. Rosenberg's reflection on the relationship between the Latin American avant-gardes and the role of technology's novelty is particularly useful to begin answering such questions, specifically when he argues that,

in the Latin American context technological novelty and mass production, with the fundamental reference to the elsewhere that modernization promises to bring closer, is principally a factor of what constitutes colonial modernity. This, and not simply the affective charge of tradition, explains more fully the reason why Futurism as such was never embraced in Latin

America: The avant-gardes questioned the desirability of what was promoted as new, since novelty so obviously reinforced the old story of being left behind in the waiting room of history. (33–34)

If Palacio is writing these texts in the late 1920s, at a moment when cinema is moving from silent film to talkies, then, why is older visual technology (the cinematograph and photography) so prevalent in both texts? What does this connection between a changing visual technology and Palacio's self-reflexivity about writing fiction (metafiction) tell us?

According to one Ecuadorian critic, Palacio has been inscribed as "el primer escritor ecuatoriano que cultivó el metalenguaje literario: el metacuento y la metanovela" (Rivas Iturralde 105). By invoking terms such as metafiction or metanarrative, and following Rivas Iturralde, I suggest that Pablo Palacio's narrators and characters are often quite conscious and preoccupied with what it means to narrate fragments of modernity in a rapidly changing global context in which cinema and other media altered how people received information and learned about the world. In turn, the exponential developments in visual technology and media also impacted people's ability to move beyond localized and sometimes narrow sensorial impression of the world to a more nuanced perception of it that engaged all the senses. Contrary to the notion that the presence of metafictional devices or narrative cues in a novel or a story disrupt the narrative flow or unveil the degree of fictionality of a given text, Monika Fludernik reminds us that "metanarration and metafiction are managed in a rather unobtrusive way in most novels and so do not weaken the illusion of a fictional world but intensify it" (63). In Palacio's fiction, the incorporation of visual technological tropes, along with specific narrative choices, intensify the fictional world present in "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" and *Débora* by collapsing and problematizing the division between perceived reality and fiction. Metafiction becomes a discursive approximation to a certain kind of modernity that links literary and visual technological languages.

The written word and the image, as two modes of perception and knowledge, are key to understanding Palacio's own aesthetic and ideological position in relation to his contemporary writers. It can be argued that Palacio's views on literature are closely linked to his preference for the short, fragmented literary narrative form, which lends itself as the canvas through which Palacio presents a critique of the project of modernity. Put differently, Palacio explores modernity's perpetual deference, unattainability, and instability by fragmenting the narrative form to mirror modernity's own lack of coherence. In what follows, Palacio's invocation of visual tropes exposes the extant contradictions between tradition and modernity in Ecuador.

The Language of Cinema in *Débora*

Between 1932 and 1933, Peruvian intellectual Luis Alberto Sánchez (1900–94) writes about his collaboration with Palacio to screen German and Italian films in Quito such as *The Blue Angel* (Josef von Sternberg, dir., 1930), starring Marlene Dietrich, or *Variété* (Ewald André Dupont, dir., 1924), though their film screening enterprise proved to be a commercial failure (Sánchez 81). These two film examples, however, are telling of film history's transitional moment since *Variété* was still a silent film, but *The Blue Angel* was a talkie. This concern with shifting cinematic technologies permeates Palacio's *Débora*, particularly its plot, which is always under construction, rejection, and re-elaboration. The novella's epigraph threads the fragments of reality and modern life that at once appear and are refuted on the page with these words and in this format:

Después de Todo:

a cada hombre hará un guiño la amargura final.

Como en el cinematógrafo
—la mano en la frente, la cara echada atrás—,
el cuerpo tiroides, ascendente y descendente
será un índice en el mar solitario del recuerdo. (23)

Following what appears to be a cryptic epigraph, the invocation of the cinematograph and of being trapped inside a machine that records images and memories gives a relative coherence to the character of Teniente who is introduced here as a symbol standing for the militarized governments in Ecuador throughout the nineteenth century, but particularly from Eloy Alfaro to the military junta in 1925.¹ The invocation of the cinematograph as the epigraph to *Débora* also reminds us that cinematography is often taken to mean writing in movement. Likewise, *cinematógrafo*, as it is used in the original Spanish has a dual resonance. It implies both the machine used to record moving images, but also refers to the person operating the machine and recording images. It is important to keep in mind that when Palacio writes and publishes "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" and *Débora* in 1927, this is also a key moment in cinema's history. Throughout the early decades of the twentieth century there were numerous attempts to improve the synchronization of sound and image. After the release of Alan Crosland's *The Jazz Singer* (1927), Hollywood and other industries shift from silent films to talkies, which also marks the transition of the type of technology used to make films.

At the very beginning of the novella, the narrator addresses and beckons Teniente to vacate the narrator's mind: "Teniente has sido mi huésped durante años. Hoy te arrojo de mí para que seas la befa de los unos y la melancolía de los otros" (25). Much in the same way that a film director creates characters on the screen, once they appear in a film, the director no longer has control of them. At various points of the novella, one is uncertain about whether what is happening is a product of the narrator's imagination or whether Teniente is after all imagining what he would like his life to become. In other words, the novella questions whether the narrator actually exerts authority over Teniente, as the initial expulsion ("Hoy te arrojo de mí") seems to suggest, or whether the character can actually exist without a narrator.²

Of particular importance for this article is the repetition of images and allusions to film and cinema. In various instances throughout the novella, there are references to the Metro Goldwin Pictures or the cinema, and at some point Teniente finds a bank note of one sucre, which he subtly divides in the following way:

Entonces, con una lógica de texto, los números ocuparon modestamente su espíritu.

Así:

Para betunar los zapatos.....	S/.0,10
Para ir al cinema.....	"0,60
Para tabacos.....	"0,30
Suman.....	S/.1,00 (38)

The cinema occupies a central place in Teniente's life and allows him to escape from the humdrum of quotidian modern experience and enter into a world rendered by his own mind, where possibilities are infinite. We might recall that images presented in early silent cinema were part of what has been called a "cinema of attractions," in which "[i]nstead of narrative forms that would later become hegemonic, the cinema of attractions was based on aesthetic astonishment: it appealed to viewers' curiosity about the new technology and fulfilled it with brief moments of images in motion" (López, "A Train of Shadows" 152). This perspective on the novelty of early moving images is particularly important to begin understanding the fragmentation and seeming lack of narrative coherence in Palacio's novella *Débora*.

Palacio's writing style, his emphasis on fleeting moments, breaks, interruptions, fragments, and snapshots of Teniente's life and his mind allow us to reflect on the role that movies might have played in the life of urban dwellers in the first decades of the twentieth century in Latin America in general, and, more specifically, in Ecuador. In other words, *Débora* presents us with fragments of modernity as seen, perceived, and understood by Teniente in a way that brings us closer to understanding technology's rapidly changing role in capturing images and attempting to give them a sequential and narrative meaning, a certain linearity and cohesion. In the early decades of the twentieth century moving images and film are rapidly shifting toward developing

new technologies to capture images, which is why Palacio's narrator also ponders on the process of writing the novella itself in relation to cinematic language. Should the narrator be following and mirroring the changes coming from narrative films? Or, should he adhere to the origins of cinema (hence the reference to the cinematograph) as a way to capture and focus on isolated and seemingly unrelated moments of everyday life, much like the Lumière Brothers did? These questions bring us to a discussion about the novelty of visual technology and the way they shape not only our aesthetic sensibilities but also our ability to be amazed and entertained.

Early forms of cinema arrived in Latin America almost immediately, "less than six months after its commercial introduction in Europe" (López, "A Train of Shadows" 151). For instance, Edison's kinetoscope was already exhibited as early as 1896 in Guadalajara, while the Lumière's cinematograph was showcased in several of Mexico's largest cities in 1898 (López, "A Train of Shadows" 151). On July 18, 1896, at the Odeon Theater in Buenos Aires, the first films of the Lumière brothers were screened (Finkielman 5–7; López, "Early Cinema" 50). In 1894, however, Edison's kinetoscope received little attention in Buenos Aires. In comparison, Brazil received its first kinetoscope by 1894 and its first cinematograph by 1896 with much critical and popular acclaim. Across Latin America, cinema's emergence received a mixed reception by both audiences and the printed press. In early 1896, Edison's kinetoscope was advertised for screenings in Guayaquil, but newspapers gave it little coverage. Instead, theater and musical performances continued receiving detailed descriptions and reviews in the entertainment section of the newspapers (Suárez Ramírez 20–60). The Lumière's cinematograph was introduced in Guayaquil in late May 1899 with relatively successful screenings. (Suárez Ramírez 23–24).³ This relationship between visual and printed media is one of great importance for a subsequent discussion of "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés," but is mentioned here as a way to illustrate the role that newspapers had in shaping the attitudes, sensibilities, and taste of audiences with the advent of emerging cinematic technologies.

To return to Palacio's *Débora*, cinema's language affects Teniente's imagination and shapes his perception of the world. There is an instance in which Teniente envisions that he encounters the woman of his dreams, though her actual identity and name are secondary. In fact, Teniente conceives that this woman could either be called Micaela or Rosa Ana, though her emergence sparks an array of passions in him. In the midst of an ardent invented encounter that develops exclusively in his mind, Teniente reasons that such a perfect scene must have a cause for being interrupted.

Pero, llega el marido. . . . No; no estará bien que sea casada . . . aunque tampoco estaría mal. O llegan los padres. ¿Quiénes son los padres? ¡Fuera! Siga este sueño dominical y romántico que también, como la realidad, apaga mi sed. Le compro ricos pendientes para excitar su alegría cinemática. Y el círculo pequeñito, que es casi como un punto dulce, de su boca, se aproxima a mis carrillos flacos. Me tiende para estrecharme el muelle templado de sus brazos; se me escurre, rozando sus senos sobre mi pecho, tanto que aviva y exalta mi pasión escondida.

Bueno, todo esto lo he visto en la pantalla; precisamente porque lo he visto, traza esta parábola desde el punto invisible del recuerdo.

He visto también la imprescindible complicación amorosa de un tercero; pero no estando en mi espíritu apto para la intriga, me imagino este principio de amor un final de film que prolongará en los buenos espíritus la idea de la felicidad. (36)

This passage is representative of some of the tensions present in the novella, particularly since what Teniente has seen at the movies is what he expects, desires, and envisions from his interactions with women and the world. Cinematic language permeates the narrative with expressions such as "alegría cinemática" or "el círculo pequeño." In the first case, "alegría cinemática" suggests the positive affective response linked to film viewing, whereas "círculo pequeño" at once describes his imagined love object but also points to the associations some avant-garde writers created between technology and the human body.⁴

Lauren Berlant has noted that the connection between the so-called object of desire and the subject who desires can be construed in terms of what she calls “cruel optimism,” which “names a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility whose realization is discovered either to be *impossible*, sheer fantasy, or *too* possible, and toxic. What’s cruel about these attachments . . . is that the subjects who have *x* in their lives might not well endure the loss of their object or scene of desire, even though its presence threatens their well-being” (94). In this sense, Teniente’s attachment to a cinematic woman, as a projected version of his desires, becomes an (im)material representation of her simultaneous presence/absence, as both real and fantasy. Rather than seeking out an actual relationship, Teniente prefers to insert himself as a character within the script he has borrowed from films and created in his mind. At certain points in this passage, there are personifications of romance and happiness, which are equated with what the imagined woman can provide, namely the semblance of happiness and an idealized lifestyle as presented in films. Inherent in *Débora*, and specifically in this example of Teniente’s rampant filmic imagination, is a critique of how films shape our perception of the world and our interaction with other human beings, particularly when it may be easier to imagine a romantic relationship than to actually have one.

The novella concludes with the disappearance, or rather, the fictive death of Teniente and at last the appearance of Débora. The narrator’s concluding words are as follows:

TENIENTE

Tu muerte repentina da un corte vertical en la suave pendiente de los hechos, de manera que en este brumoso deslizamiento me detengo y veo la noche.

Débora está demasiado lejos y por eso es una magnolia. Habríamos ido a verla.

Débora: bailarina yanquilandesa. Dos ojos azules. Sabía dar a los brazos flexibilidades de cuello de garza.

Imagino que tiene un lejano sabor de miel.

Y por temor a corromper ese recuerdo guardo tu ridículo yo. Todos los hombres guardarán un momento su yo para paladear el lejano sabor de Débora, la que luchará por volver al espíritu cada vez más desmayadamente y a más largos intervalos, como un muelle que va perdiendo fuerza.

En este momento inicial y final suprimo las minucias y difumino los contornos

DE UN SUAVE COLOR BLANCO. (66–67)

In the conclusion, the narrator at once claims the death of his character Teniente, but also wants to retain that “ridiculous I.” That “I” is equated here with the character’s subjectivity and his perception of what it means to see Débora as an unattainable source of desire, as a woman whose appearance on the screen sparks conflicting emotions on viewers. The novella’s final image is one of simultaneous creation and destruction in which the characters’ contours are dissolved onto a white projection screen or an empty page. By ending the narrative in this way, and by drawing parallels between film viewing and reading/writing fiction, Palacio is suggesting that as readers and audience members we are in control of bringing characters to life, making them work for us. We can project our desires, frustrations, and feelings onto them. More importantly, the novella suggests that there is a degree of inseparability between how we perceive fiction now that we can visualize and compare it to images pervasive after the advent of cinema.

Here, rather than just looking at the relationship between cinema and what it can gain from literature, Palacio inverts the equation to ask us to question what literature has gained from the language of cinema. Put differently, Palacio’s novella enables us to consider how cinema has changed the way literature is produced and the way it is read.

In the rhetoric of modernity, there is a desire for scientific innovation as a sign of progress. The emergence of new and evolving technology forces citizens across urban centers of Latin America to adapt to it and use it. As part of this rhetoric and, in an effort to be modern, one has to rapidly adapt to the changes in technology. In both stories, however, Palacio’s writings

suggest an alternative critical direction in which one ought to take a step back and explore the effects that visual technology's novelty has had in changing the way we look at images of a fragmented modernity. Put differently, Palacio's engagement with the cinematograph's novelty and how other devices superseded it allows for a wider reflection on early twentieth century urban dwellers' ability to capture, sense, and view instances and fragments of modernity. Such an impact can be paralleled to the effect that photography had in determining how and what could be captured and preserved for posterity. Palacio's fiction prompts contemporary readers to revisit the historical importance that moving (cinematography) and still images (photography) have had on the ways in which we view modern life, even after the emergence of technological innovations that superseded the cinematograph or photography. For the characters in Palacio's fiction, the initial sensations of novelty, of being taken aback, of being impressed are still forces to be reckoned with. The character of Teniente in *Débora* is a prime example of how citizens in Ecuador and Latin America in the early decades of the twentieth century were grappling with films as a source of entertainment, while showing us how cinema shapes this character's thought process by cutting, splicing, fragmenting reality and thus presenting the embedded chaos, nonlinearity, and set of relations among seemingly unrelated thoughts or events in one's life.

Photographic Reading and the *Crónica* in "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés"

The presence of photography and cinema in Palacio's fiction points to self-awareness about the desire to engage fictional writing with visual technology that writes or documents. In this sense, Fernando Nina argues that Palacio's emphasis on writing must be understood in relation to "el alumbramiento del signo (fotografía), esa escritura de luz, [que] se contrapone a aquel 'arte sordomudo', la escritura del *kiné*, del movimiento. Estamos en la zona de diferencia entre ver y saber, en el origen no originario de la *différance*, del desplazamiento/aplazamiento constante de la condicionalidad del signo" (438). I suggested previously that the primary concern in *Débora* was how the language of cinema shaped the perception, actions, and ways of seeing and feeling reality for Teniente. If cinematography deals with a form of writing or recording movement, in fact, Palacio's novella focuses on lack of movement and relative inaction.

In contrast, photography as a form of writing or drawing with light leads the narrator to action in search of truth behind the mystery that propels his imagination and quest for answers to solve the murder of Ramírez. Palacio's "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" begins with an epigraph presumably taken from *El Comercio*, a newspaper in Quito that is still in existence, in which the notion of clarifying events becomes an impending ethical question for the reader. The epigraph's precise provenance is hard to determine and it may be a futile task to search for its date of publication. More importantly, the use of an epigraph from a newspaper suggests two particular issues. First, it points to the entangled relationship among news, fiction, and *crónicas*, which were published alongside each other in newspapers across Latin America throughout the nineteenth century and until today.⁵ Second, as in the case of later writers such as Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) or Adolfo Bioy Casares (1914–99), the fictive use of an epigraph that is presumably taken from an actual source points to the longstanding divisions between fiction and non-fiction, truth and untruth, or reliable and unreliable narrators and texts.

Although an extended discussion of these areas is beyond the scope of this article, the epigraph's presence in "Un hombre muerto" is of prime importance because of what it reveals about the need to question what and how we form opinions about what we read. The epigraph reads as follows: "¿Cómo echar al canasto los palpitantes acontecimientos callejeros? 'Esclarecer la verdad es acción moralizadora'" (73). The narrator in this story functions in multiple roles. At this point, and by the inclusion of this epigraph, the narrator becomes a reader whose ethical duty is to search for truth behind urban crime events. Searching for ways to clarify the mysteries of crimes in a city such as Quito leads to a moralizing action, according to the opening words in this epigraph. Contrary to some fictional works, the opening words of the narrative itself are not

those of the narrator. Instead, what we see is what the narrator is reading. Palacio thus frames the short story with a fictionalized *crónica*, which appeared in *El Diario de la tarde*, and describes in a detached manner the streets in which Ramírez's murder took place and the police station that took care of investigating the motives leading to his death. The same *crónica* describes how Ramírez refused to accompany the police to the station and how this character died a few hours after receiving medical attention.

The nameless narrator becomes obsessed with finding the circumstances that led to having a man kicked to death, the exact reasons for such a brutal murder, and understanding what the chronicle meant by suggesting that Ramírez was *vicioso*. Furthermore, as the narrator states, "El único punto que me importó desde entonces fue comprobar qué clase de vicio tenía el difunto Ramírez" (76). The narrator then goes to the police station to ask further questions and instead obtains two photographs or snapshots of Ramírez's corpse, which were taken with intent of having family members identify the victim. At a later point in the story, the narrator's fixation with the photographs, which are not sufficiently revealed to us as readers, reaches a moment of revelation when he states: "Miré y remiré las fotografías, una por una, haciendo de ellas un estudio completo. Las acercaba a mis ojos; las separaba, alargando la mano; procuraba descubrir sus misterios" (78). Of course, this complete study is something that the narrator mentions, but does not include it in the narrative. Following this instance, the narrator describes Ramírez's facial features in exaggerated terms.⁶

In the short story "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés," through the voice of his nameless narrator, Palacio suggests what it means to read by following an inductive method to figure out a mystery, particularly when limited details are available. The story's narrator associates the inductive method with Francis Bacon and contrasts it with the Aristotelian deductive method. In this way, the narrator takes as his point of departure the scant information that appears in the *crónica* and the two photographs, which is to say that he goes from small pieces of detail to build and describe a larger narrative. In this sense, one can read Palacio's "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" as his attempt to display a reading method. This relationship between photography and literature is of prime importance, particularly since "Photography as a theme played a significant role in Latin American fiction beginning in the early twentieth century, in texts that do not reproduce images but evoke them for a variety of purposes" (Schwartz and Tierney-Tello 8). Based on the written and visual evidence that the narrator repeatedly calls 'documents,' the narrator begins to envision what truths might be embedded in them as one set of possibilities. At multiple points in the narrative, for instance, the narrator reflects on how logic is detrimental to the reading experience and suggests that the acts of reading and writing have to do with the pieces that we insert within a text, which assist in moving beyond the surface layer or most obvious meaning. This helps to explain the narrator's obsession with re-examining the photographs and *crónica* in the event that he has missed some crucial information.

As a way to deal with the issue of homosexuality in the first decades of the twentieth century, the narrator comes to the conclusion that Ramírez "Había tenido desde pequeño una desviación de sus instintos, que lo depravaron en lo sucesivo, hasta que, por un impulso fatal, hubo de terminar con el trágico fin que lamentamos" (81). From the narrator's imagination and word choices in describing homosexuality in Ecuador during the early decades of twentieth century in terms of "desviación," "depravaron," and "impulso," we get a glimpse that the narrator falls prey to very homophobic ideas and the social mores of Ecuadorian society, which might have led to the murder of Ramírez.⁷ In trying to solve the mystery of Ramírez's crime, the narrator partially betrays his original intention in serving justice and doing an ethical reading of *la crónica* and the photographs by imagining that Ramírez's inability to control his homoerotic desire is what brings about his own death, first by attempting to attract a construction worker and then the worker's teenage son in a dark alley. The reconstruction of the events leading to murder emerges as a consequence of the narrator's attentiveness to the visual details of the two photographs of Ramírez. By reading and interpreting these images, the nameless narrator begins to construct

one story and thus brings Ramírez back to life. Reading and looking at photographs to dig deeper into a story with scant details becomes an ethical duty for the narrator in a city such as Quito where few of its citizens would take such extreme interest in reconstructing the life story of a complete stranger.

As a visual medium and technology, photography is pervasively present as a textual reference and yet conspicuously absent given that there are no printed photographs accompanying the story. Instead, the reader must believe in their existence as well as the interpretation that the protagonist gives them. As noted in a study on the relationship between reading and photography, "Although the reader never *sees* the photographs, their presence motivates conflict and mystery and provides insight into some of the dilemmas provided by the medium that is at once a representation of reality and a part of reality as well" (Schwarz and Tierney-Tello 8–9). In this sense, "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" is a story that is primarily preoccupied with the insufficiency of photography as visual language and *la crónica* (as in newspaper reporting). Put differently, the protagonist of "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" engages in an active process of reading, interpreting, and suturing the fragments of Ramírez's life, which are now reduced to two photographs and a brief newspaper article. Moreover, we can read the story as one that leads to us to think about the complementarity of the written word and photography in the sense that there is an insufficiency of the written language, the *crónica*, which falls short of conveying miniscule details, which the photographs contain.

If "Photography is nothing else than a writing of light, a script of light," as Eduardo Cadava has suggested (xvii), the two textual photographs present in "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" serve to guide the main character in his quest of capturing the past. If photography captures a single moment of reality and leaves details out of what the lens can frame, the narrator-protagonist of the short story is not merely satisfied with the fixity of time or what the photograph can reveal. Instead, there is a certain rejection and questioning of photography's limits in writing, describing, and inscribing a story for posterity. Motivated by photography's insufficiency as a medium to fully write or narrate stories, the protagonist of "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" reads into the images the pieces of information that the frame and the camera's lens has left out. There are two portraits of Ramírez: one when he was still alive and another of his corpse. The story thus presents its readers with the task of reconstructing with narrator Ramírez's passage from life to death. Photography and its accompanying printed text, as they appear in a newspaper, lead the story's narrator to assume a detective role by engaging in questioning, reading, and investigating the photographs' extant context.

The cinematic perspective can be gleaned from the way in which the narrator treats photography, newspaper clippings, and information by arranging and rearranging them in different configurations much like an a film editor would cut, splice, dissolve, and assemble a montage to provide what can only be a partial and imperfect perspective of reality. As one critic notes in reference to "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés," the story's narrator becomes interested in "*Leer, recortar, pegar, conjunto de operaciones intencionales que se condensan a partir del montaje de la cita y el relato*" (De Leone 3).

Conclusion

Reading *Débora* and "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" together helps us to reflect on the limits and the ever-changing nature of technology in the early decades of the twentieth century. With the rise of cinematic technology, to some degree photography took on a secondary role and its presumed ability to capture still images was superseded by the moving image. Both technologies are concerned with grasping a fleeting moment, selecting and preserving it for posterity. In Palacio's fiction, visual technologies allow for a consideration about the role of photography and cinema as two forms of visual texts that can be looked at, read, and interpreted by the narrator-protagonist of "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" and by Teniente in *Débora*. Photography can

elicit and complement our ability to visualize, fixating our imagination, and allowing it to expand to fill in the narrative gaps of an incomplete story only to provide one possible explanation of the murder of Ramírez. Ultimately, the story's fragmented structure invites its readers to be in a position similar to the narrator's in "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" in the sense that one must also question what and how we are told a story. Palacio's use of visual language in his fiction beckons readers to look at the connections between cinematic technology, photography, and fiction writing in the early decades of the twentieth century to reconfigure the relation between two forms of storytelling: the visual and the literary. Whereas cinema and photography can only capture fragments of reality and provide a limited perspective on modern life, Palacio suggests in *Débora* and "Un hombre muerto a puntapiés" that literature can also gain by drawing from what visual technology has to offer, particularly through its use of narrative techniques that simultaneously write and fragment the fleeting experience of being modern.

NOTES

¹ Between Eloy Alfaro's murder in 1912 and the Revolución Juliana of 1925, there were six different democratically elected presidents and two military juntas. The inclusion of Teniente is a direct commentary on this tumultuous period and can be read as a premonition of sporadic militarization of Ecuadorian politics through World War II. A fuller discussion of Ecuador's militarization is beyond the main focus of this paper. For more information on the Revolución Juliana and its preceding historical context, see Paz y Miño and Herrera's *El proceso juliano* (2011) and Paz y Miño's *La Revolución Juliana* (2013).

² This engagement in a discussion about literary characters' autonomy relative to its author finds its strongest point of reference in Luigi Pirandello's metatheatrical play *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* [*Six Characters in Search of an Author*] (1921).

³ There were a number of short films and newsreels made in Ecuador, but the first feature length film is Augusto San Miguel's *El tesoro de Atahualpa* (1924), which unfortunately has been lost and only newspaper clippings serve to give a sense of the film's content and reception.

⁴ A few of the Latin American writers who explored the relationship between early twentieth-century technology and the human body include Alfredo Mario Ferreiro (Uruguay, 1899–1959), Juan Parra del Riego (Peru, 1894–1925), Alberto Hidalgo (Peru, 1897–1967), Hugo Mayo (Ecuador, 1895–1988), and Luis Cardoza y Aragón (Guatemala, 1901–92). For further discussions, see Unruh's *Latin American Vanguard* (1994) and Rosenberg's *The Avant-Garde and Geopolitics in Latin America* (2006).

⁵ For discussions on the early relationship between *la crónica*, newspapers, and literature, see González's *La crónica modernista hispanoamericana* (1983) and *A Companion to Spanish American Modernismo* (2007), Rotker's *La invención de la crónica* (1992), and Reynolds's *The Spanish American Crónica Modernista, Temporality, and Material Culture* (2012). For studies that move beyond *la crónica*'s impact during the early decades of the twentieth century, see Bielsa's *The Latin American Urban Crónica* (2006) and *Escrituras a ras de suelo* (2014) edited by Aguilar, et al.

⁶ A fuller engagement with theories on photography is beyond the scope of this section and the general direction of this article, particularly because the minimal description of the two photographs in "Un hombre muerto" does not provide extended details of what appears in them. Instead, they are used as a literary device that the narrator uses for investigative purposes. Nonetheless, the narrator's attitude toward the photographs seems to be in line with Sontag's theorization of the detached viewer in *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2003) or her pivotal study *On Photography* (1990) in which Sontag advances photography's central place in the experience of being modern.

⁷ While the narrator in "Un hombre muerto" comes to the conclusion that Ramírez must have been gay and possibly a pederast, my discussion of the story and the main argument in this article do not rest on an in-depth engagement with queer theories or the gay body. Despite the ghostly presence, or rather the absence of Ramírez's body in the story, this is an area of analysis that could be further developed in future studies, particularly in relation to Foster's work on queer bodies, literature, and photography in *Sexual Textualities* (1997) and *Argentine, Mexican, and Guatemalan Photography* (2014). Although there are marked differences between actual photography in the way that Foster studies it and the literary use and reference to photography as Palacio employs it in this story, a queer reading or critique of "Un hombre muerto" might be possible. In the Anglophone literary tradition, Kosofsky Sedgwick's seminal essay "Queer Performativity" (1993) is useful in its exploration of the linkage between the affect of shame and a reading of Henry James's work. A more recent example that examines the Latin American literary canon

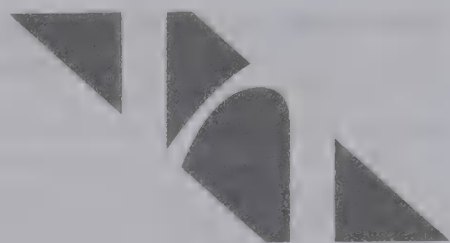
is Balderston's *El deseo, enorme cicatriz luminosa* (2014). There are countless other sources to which one can turn to further develop a reading of Ramírez's absent queer body in future work.

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¿Qué es un fantasma? Trauma pasado y fantasía en el cine contemporáneo sobre la Guerra Civil española: El cine de Guillermo del Toro



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Resumen: En las películas *El laberinto del fauno* y *El espinazo del diablo* de Guillermo del Toro el elemento de un mundo fantástico es paralelo al real en el cual se usa un nivel alegórico y se crea una vía de escape para sus personajes, quienes huyen de una realidad mucho más peligrosa. Ambas obras utilizan el monstruo fantástico yuxtapuesto al monstruo real. Este se representa en dos personajes, Jacinto y el capitán Vidal, quienes personifican el trauma colectivo de la guerra y el fascismo. El objetivo del presente estudio es argumentar que el punto en común para ambos es su falta de pasado y la consecuente capacidad de enfrentarse a unos recuerdos inexistentes como una representación simbólica de la cuestión de la memoria histórica en España. El hecho de que los personajes no puedan aprender de su pasado hace que no puedan construir su presente dentro de unas normas sociales. Esta falta de adaptación los deshumaniza y les hace comportarse de forma monstruosa, lo que genera una representación simbólica de los problemas de España para enfrentarse a su propia memoria histórica.

Palabras clave: ghost/fantasma, Guillermo del Toro, monster/monstruo, past/pasado, Spanish Civil War/Guerra Civil española, trauma/trauma

Tradicionalmente, el cine ha servido como reflejo, representación y metáfora de un sistema social que lo produce y lo consume. El tantas veces calificados como “cine de género”, especialmente el de terror y el fantástico, funcionan a menudo como parábola del miedo colectivo dentro del sistema en el que son creados. Ambos funcionan como un método de evasión porque canalizan terrores reales a través de terrores ficticios y porque siempre es mejor evitar los miedos propios a través de los ajenos cuando son presentados en la pantalla como un espectáculo con un principio y, sobre todo, un final. De esta forma el estudio del cine de terror y del cine fantástico a menudo trata de responder a la pregunta de a qué le tenemos miedo, y, de acuerdo con esto, una de las respuestas a la que nos lleva es al monstruo. Por ello, cabe preguntarse qué o quién es el monstruo y cómo nos relacionamos con él.

El presente trabajo trata de responder parcialmente a esta pregunta a través del análisis de la figura del monstruo en dos trabajos del director mexicano Guillermo del Toro, los cuales representan el trágico episodio de la Guerra Civil española. Lo hacen desde el filtro del “cine de género” y como un ejercicio de representación de la memoria y el pasado.¹ En *El espinazo del diablo* y *El laberinto del fauno* se nos presentan dos historias ambientadas durante y después del conflicto en una clara atmósfera sobrenatural que acompaña al ambiente del momento histórico representado. Ambas representan el trauma de la guerra y el fascismo, jugando con la figura del monstruo fantástico y el humano, en sus dos antagonistas, el capitán Vidal y Jacinto. El presente trabajo argumenta que ambos personajes sufren debido a su falta de pasado, y por lo tanto de recuerdos, como una alegoría del problema colectivo de la memoria histórica en España, ya que el no poder aprender de su pasado hace que los personajes no puedan enfrentarse a su presente dentro de las normas morales del pacto social establecido, y su inadaptación es la que los deshumaniza y los monstrifica.

En *El espinazo del diablo* el espectador se ve obligado a lidiar con la *a priori* terrorífica figura del fantasma, y en *El laberinto del fauno* le son presentadas diversas y amenazadoras criaturas del inframundo; sin embargo, en ninguna de las historias estos son los verdaderos monstruos. Jacinto, el villano de *El espinazo del diablo*, es un joven huérfano que fue abandonado en el colegio de niño, criado allí casi sin contacto con el exterior, y cuyo único recuerdo de su pasado es una foto borrosa. Vidal, que dentro de *El laberinto del fauno* representa el fascismo institucional del régimen, es un capitán del ejército golpista obsesionado con honrar la memoria de su padre, a quien no conoció ni recuerda, del que solamente guarda un reloj de bolsillo como objeto personal. Ambos son los monstruos reales que asolan a los niños protagonistas y al espectador y que, como hemos destacado, luchan por una historia con la que no cuentan. El trauma de los dos villanos se origina en su falta de pasado y en su necesidad de recuperarlo, lo cual representa la represión de la memoria histórica en España. Con la presencia de espíritus, faunos y otras criaturas, el director crea historias en un ambiente fantástico que, sin embargo, nos conducen a través de la crudeza de una historia muy real y nos hacen reflexionar sobre quiénes son los verdaderos monstruos. De esta forma, el director dota de un sentido de rebelión y reivindicación a un género, por lo general, devaluado en su sentido como mero entretenimiento. Con la creación de mundos imaginarios y de criaturas imposibles, el artista se enfrenta a una realidad que no le gusta en un acto de rebeldía. Esto es realmente lo que el cine fantástico y el de terror han sido siempre: una rebelión contra el sistema establecido o una reacción contra la industria clásica del hollywoodiense *happy ending*. Contra esto, la reacción del propio sistema es tradicionalmente la fagocitación del contrasistema, o sea, la creación de sus propios productos dentro del género que, sin dejar de representar, devalúan el reflejo. En su obra seminal *Dark Dreams 2.0: A Psychological History of the Modern Horror Film from the 1950s to the 21st century* Charles Derry afirma que:

even that most subversive American genre, the horror film, moved toward simple amusement because it was easy and unproblematic. And yet, as a subconscious testimony, many of the most successful films implicitly evoked American obliviousness, this refusal to look clearly at contemporary problems, politics or horror. (309)

Así, el mismo Derry cuestiona la situación actual del cine de terror alegando que, si lo tomamos como un mero entretenimiento comercial, pierde su función y su mensaje de advertencia, denominándolo cine “de amnesia”, el cual olvida la memoria y contamina al espectador con historias superficiales y repetitivas, reafirmando el sistema capitalista en el que se crean y absorben cualquier intento de subversión (307). De modo contrario, del Toro construye sus películas con la introducción de un mensaje de advertencia, huyendo de la “amnesia” de un cine absorbido por el sistema. Sus personajes son una representación—dentro de este cine de género—del rechazo de la sociedad española a enfrentarse con su propia memoria histórica y al trauma colectivo que supone, simbolizada a través de la falta de pasado de estos personajes. En oposición a este cine que pierde la memoria, los simbólicos monstruos de del Toro nos hacen volver al pasado para entender el presente. Sus monstruos, tanto los fantásticos como los reales, tienen un punto en común: no conocen su historia. El que olvida su pasado, condena su futuro, y los monstruos del director mexicano no son las criaturas aparentemente monstruosas, sino los humanos que, carentes de pasado y como representación del sistema que los creó, desafían al espectador presentándose como su reflejo.

Michel Foucault nos presenta su noción del monstruo humano, que lo es porque viola las leyes jurídicas y de la naturaleza; es la excepción que asusta por la diferencia sin posibilidad de corrección. Los monstruos de del Toro, sin embargo, no se ajustan directamente a esta definición, ya que en ningún momento queda probado que rompan las leyes naturales, ni, en el caso de Vidal, jurídicas.² Son monstruos porque rompen las leyes sociales, entendidas como convenciones, y son juzgados por acciones moralmente reprobables desde el punto de vista del

espectador. Ya que ellos mismos no comparten estos parámetros morales, no se les puede juzgar como monstruos humanos, sino como monstruos sociales. Tenemos así que las figuras de Vidal y de Jacinto son monstruosas desde el punto de vista social. Son personas normales, no están idealizadas, porque nos representan a todos nosotros. Son parte de nuestra naturaleza y nuestra historia. Son humanos y todas sus características nos reflejan en mayor o menos medida, entre ellas su sadismo y su falta de empatía. La falta de pasado de estos personajes y la negación de una historia propia les ha impedido simbólicamente llegar a adquirir estas normas sociales y, por ello, no las siguen ni sienten ninguna culpa. Lo monstruoso de estos personajes es que son reales y su monstruosidad proviene de lo social o de la posibilidad de llegar a ser como ellos.

Este monstruo humano es recuperado en las teorías de Derry, quien, dentro de la categoría del *horror-of-personality*, afirma, en su clasificación sobre el cine de terror a la que pertenecerían el capitán Vidal y Jacinto, que el monstruo del terror clásico nunca era humano, aunque en ocasiones pudiera parecerlo. Drácula o Frankenstein—y con ellos los fantasmas de *El espinazo del diablo* o las criaturas de *El laberinto del fauno* (incluyendo a la princesa)—aunque antropomorfos, no eran humanos, eran otra cosa. Los que lo fueron, como Santi, el niño fantasma en *El espinazo del diablo* viven atrapados en un estado en el que probablemente no quieran estar, lo que los convierte también en víctimas, víctimas de su propia naturaleza y de su pasado humano. De acuerdo a Derry, desde *Psicosis*, considerada la película seminal del terror moderno, el monstruo es el ser humano deformado, demente o corrupto, pero humano: el asesino, el psicópata, el zombi. Igualmente Robin Wood, en su clásico artículo “The American Nightmare. Horror in the 70s” (63), afirma que el punto de inflexión de la figura del monstruo llega en la década de 1960. Existe entonces un cambio de paradigma según él en el que la familia como núcleo social se rompe. Lo que antes era una amenaza externa al individuo/núcleo familiar pasa ahora a originarse dentro de ellos, el monstruo humano (interno), lo cual lo hace invencible ya que su destrucción es nuestra propia destrucción. Es por ello que para Derry el monstruo real es el monstruo de la personalidad, el humano, contrapuesto al sobrenatural o la criatura fantástica. Este nuevo monstruo ya no asusta a la gente por su apariencia, ya que se trata de alguien como ellos. Al espectador ya no le asustan los fantasmas o los vampiros, sino lo que es más cercano a él mismo, lo que es como él, el otro que ya no es el Otro³, sino él mismo otrificado.⁴ Remitiéndonos a Lacan, no hablamos del Otro como el orden simbólico cultural, sino como nosotros sin llegar a ser nosotros mismos. Mediante el lenguaje, el otro es ajeno, es un tipo de monstruosidad y es un reflejo. Para Lacan, el individuo internaliza la cultura a través del lenguaje que aprende del otro, el sujeto o individuo ajeno. El Otro es el orden simbólico formado por la cultura y el lenguaje que construye la identidad del individuo—y luego el sujeto—lo que lo anula como individuo autónomo. El sujeto es por tanto el resultado de una construcción cultural y su represión de lo real. Es a través de este elemento, el otro, que internalizamos y aprendemos el Otro, y al descubrir al monstruo en ese otro, el propio sujeto se monstrifica. En ese sentido, el problema de Vidal y Jacinto procede de su falta de historia personal y de sus recuerdos como sujetos que les han sido robados por lo que se alejan de su Otro y su construcción como individuos queda anulada, quedando reducidos a fantasmas.

De la misma forma en la que Lacan presenta lo real reprimido como parte de la construcción del sujeto, Wood presenta el monstruo como una parte reprimida de nosotros mismos convertida en una amenaza a través de nuestros miedos, ya que proyectamos lo reprimido para poder odiarlo. De esta forma impedir la posibilidad de aceptar al otro como parte de nosotros. Por todo ello es por lo que el monstruo humano es el más terrorífico: no solo es plausible, también es cercano (puede dañarnos) y podemos llegar a convertirnos en él debido a la represión de nuestra propia monstruosidad. Así, una razón para ver cine de terror es el poder canalizar esa parte monstruosa de nosotros mismos al sentir repulsión por lo que vemos en la pantalla. El espectador, asustado, creará rechazo hacia un monstruo que se presenta demasiado similar a lo que siempre ha visto, y que lo asusta por ser, potencialmente, lo que más miedo le da: él mismo.

Tomando esta posición del monstruo moderno como monstruo humano, podemos ver que en el cine de del Toro los monstruos son simbólicos. Representan la opresión y el miedo de la guerra y la dictadura. Son monstruos reales e históricos, son monstruos de verdad porque son humanos y, en su monstruosidad, son parte de todos nosotros; es la parte de nosotros que queremos evitar y esconder y a la que identificamos como nuestro Otro reprimido. Según Jeffrey Cohen, el monstruo tiene que ser la diferencia—lo distinto—pero no es solo lo que no somos, sino también lo que no queremos ser. El mismo Cohen argumenta que el monstruo es cultura y, por tanto, es un producto y un reflejo social (17).

Los monstruos modernos del director reflejan el escepticismo colectivo de una sociedad que ya no cree en los fantasmas, sino en los monstruos reales con los que ha convivido y a los que tiene que enfrentarse, aquellos que representan su pasado desde su propio presente. Mientras que el monstruo humano nace en la industria estadounidense en los años 60, producto de un país sumido en la Guerra Fría y en el conflicto en Vietnam, en España no aparece realmente hasta el periodo de democracia. Se trata del momento en que el país está por fin preparado para enfrentarse a sus propios fantasmas, el trauma de su historia reciente, y es esto lo que nos hace darnos cuenta de que esos monstruos humanos son el verdadero terror de la historia.⁵ De esta forma, nos encontramos a través del Otro con dos monstruos reales, humanos pero lejanos: Jacinto y Vidal. Cuando Ofelia y Carlos, los niños protagonistas, tienen que desafiar a criaturas extrañas y sobrenaturales, lo hacen desde el punto de vista del igual, del que es como ellos y no un extraño. Ambos prefieren afrontar una situación aparentemente imposible y fantástica antes que al monstruo cercano, al que sus acciones identifican como el Otro que, a pesar de ser humano, es el realmente diferente y peligroso. De esta forma, los monstruos sobrenaturales son una amenaza evasiva para ellos, quienes prefieren apartarse de una realidad traumática a través de una sobrenatural que, por no ser humana, ha perdido su capacidad de amenaza, y funciona como evasión.

Así los monstruos antes externos y sobrenaturales, según Linda Williams, “move off the maps and into the home, move from being literally out there . . . to being metaphorically in here, interior, constitutive of the self” (1). De esta forma, en sus películas del Toro compara las dos vertientes del monstruo y muestra a cuál debemos de temer realmente: a nosotros mismos y no a los fantasmas ni a las criaturas fantásticas. Las criaturas no-humanas son para del Toro protectoras, aunque ambiguas. Nunca sabemos si el fauno de *El laberinto del fauno* es amigo o enemigo, pero siempre es más cercano que el capitán. El espíritu que asusta a los niños en *El espinazo del diablo*, al que conocen como “el que suspira”, Santi, resulta ser una advertencia protectora para ellos, mientras que la amenaza real es Jacinto. El mismo director declaraba lo siguiente en una entrevista, refiriéndose a los monstruos tradicionales:

I think that perfection is practically unattainable but imperfection is right at hand. So that's why I love monsters: because they represent a side of us we should actually embrace and celebrate. . . . I think that everything we try to deny about our bodies and our lives—about being fallible and mortal, that we're going to rot, and that our armpits smell, that we are imperfect, that we sin and screw up—all these are the things that actually make us human. And that's why I try to make the monsters the heroes in my movies. (Citado en Kermode)

De acuerdo con esta idea del monstruo heroico, estos dejan de ser malvados en sus películas, el peligro real ahora son las personas: “the only real monsters are human. And the only thing you have to be afraid of is people, not creatures, not ghosts” (citado en Kermode). En ese sentido, Tony Magistrale divide al monstruo humano en el invadido por el mal (e.g., Regan en *El exorcista*) o el monstruo humano que es malvado *per se*, ya sea por locura como lo que entiende Williams por monstruos modernos (e.g., Norman en *Psicosis*) o por nacimiento (e.g., Rhoda en *La mala semilla*). No sucede lo mismo con los villanos de del Toro, las motivaciones

del capitán y de Jacinto son distintas. No es demencia, tampoco nacieron así, saben lo que hacen y no creen que esté mal, tienen valores morales distintos. Sus monstruos lo son sin saberlo y sin estar enfermos. Son producto de un sistema, una historia, o un pasado (o la falta del mismo): son monstruos sociales.

Ambos son monstruos creados en parte por su origen y su entorno social, así como por su historia personal, aunque no es lo único que puede explicar sus acciones. Son humanos que no nacen monstruosos, sino que son producto de su ambiente. Jacinto, el niño que se cría solo en un orfanato y Vidal, el capitán criado en la ideología fascista que trata de seguir los pasos de su padre. Annalee Newitz hace una división de lo monstruoso parecida a la que establecía Derry con su *horror-of-personality*: monstruos “mental” y monstruos “bodily” (10). Los villanos de *del Toro* son monstruos mentales en el sentido de que no tienen ningún problema o rareza física. Ni siquiera podemos argumentar, como el *horror-of-personality*, que tengan problemas mentales; están cuerdos, pero tienen un sistema de valores diferente. Son humanos aparentemente normales con problemas de ajustes morales. Tienen la capacidad de escoger sus acciones, pero las elecciones que toman son moralmente censurables por las convenciones sociales. El mismo sistema que los ha formado los castiga por haber traspasado la línea moral que los separa de la normalidad a través de sus acciones y decisiones. Ambos monstruos son producto de una sociedad sumada a unas decisiones individuales que los apartan del marco aceptado. Sin embargo, nos sentimos inmediatamente atraídos por los villanos.

Otro de los aspectos del monstruo es su aceptación como animal mediático. En el cine moderno, a diferencia del terror clásico, el monstruo es presentado y desarrollado como personaje—el villano al mismo nivel que el héroe—lo que permite al espectador identificarse (o al menos comprenderlo y aceptarlo como un personaje completo y cercano). Comprender no implica justificar ni defender, pero sí ver todos los ángulos del personaje. El público moderno no puede aceptar monstruos maniqueos. Como defiende Magistrale, en el terror moderno el público necesita identificarse con el monstruo de alguna manera, o al menos entenderlo, por lo que necesitamos un personaje desarrollado para convertirlo en monstruo.

A tenor de este aspecto social del monstruo una de las preguntas que surgen es si este nace o se hace, o si podemos confiar en la bondad natural. Según Derry, “even monsters like the Pale Man and Captain Vidal are *born*: evil is thus the most natural thing in the world” (127, en cursiva en el original). Newitz, sin embargo, argumenta desde una postura marxista que el sistema económico es el que nos crea a nosotros, atendiendo a las implicaciones sociales e históricas del personaje. Habla de la frustración ante la falta de realización de las expectativas como motivación para el monstruo, siempre desde un contexto económico-social. Ella misma recoge en el libro *Pretend that We’re Dead: Capitalist Monsters in American Pop Culture* testimonios de asesinos en serie de los que se deduce que su comportamiento viene de una falta de respaldo social y personal. La autora recoge, por ejemplo, la declaración de Henry Lee Lucas, “Everything I had was destroyed” (citado en Newitz, 33), revelando con ella que su monstruosidad, lo que aparentemente lo aleja de la humanidad, quizá está, de hecho, acercándolo. Desde este punto de vista somos capaces de comprender al capitán Vidal y a Jacinto; entendemos de dónde vienen sus acciones ya que conocemos algunas de sus características personales. Tanto el capitán como Jacinto lo han perdido todo, representado en ambos por los lazos familiares, y se aferran sin escrúpulos a lo que tienen. No les preocupa moralmente porque lo creen justo: como han sufrido, tienen el derecho de hacer sufrir, creen que su fin justifica sus medios. La falta de pasado de ambos personajes es lo que los motiva a convertirse en monstruos y, al mismo tiempo, el hilo conductor de ambas películas que, en definitiva, tratan sobre la historia y la memoria. Tanto Jacinto como el capitán imaginaron una felicidad que les fue negada. De ahí la obsesión con el tiempo de uno y con las fotos del otro: el tiempo es perfecto y controlable; el pasado siempre fue mejor; y no pueden decepcionarlos. El trauma de estos dos personajes viene precisamente de no tener pasado y de no ser capaz de enfrentarse a él. La falta de historia les hace perder una referencia moral que los integre dentro de un sistema social. Esta falta de recuerdo los deshumaniza. Ese

es su trauma—el saberse moralmente separados del resto del grupo—y es también el reflejo de la memoria histórica. Olvidar el pasado (o anularlo) deshumaniza la situación y, con ella, a los personajes.

Sobre su relación con el pasado, Newitz sostiene que “nothing is more dangerous than a monster whose story is ignored” (2). Los verdaderos monstruos de del Toro carecen de historia y de pasado. El capitán Vidal es convertido en monstruo por su historia personal. Obsesionado con el tiempo y la perpetuidad solamente busca tener un hijo que lo recuerde, ya que a él su padre le fue arrebatado. La falta de su recuerdo hace que lo idealice: el único objetivo de Vidal es convertirse en su progenitor. La idea de no llegar a estar a su altura lo lleva a actuar como lo hace. El símbolo de este pasado familiar perdido es su reloj, congelado en el tiempo como recuerdo de esa historia desaparecida que marca a fuego su presente:

Vidal rejects this sentimentality but has the revealing trait of carrying this watch with him at all times, an ironic indicator of the fact that he is haunted and trapped in a traumatic moment from his past. . . . It seems that Vidal seeks to control time in order to control both his own destiny and that of others, attempting to “fix” time and maintain the order and power of patriarchal law. (Clark y McDonald 55)

El capitán, como Jacinto, no tiene pasado; es huérfano y vive en la carencia de ese padre que se fue y detuvo el tiempo. Su obsesión con el reloj lo sitúa como varado, estancado en un momento que lo ha dejado marcado y del que no puede huir: “His mystification of the love for his father in terms of an exaltation of death and war certainly points to a characterization of Fascism as a culture of death and of a masculine veneration of war” (Sánchez 138). La figura de Vidal se va a utilizar para representar el fascismo, la dictadura y el trauma. Jacinto, por su lado, como monstruo real aparece como un traidor, un hombre fuera del sistema debido a su aislamiento de toda una vida en el orfanato o un verdadero fantasma terrenal asolado por su pasado: “no quiero que nadie sepa que he estado aquí quince años” (del Toro, *El espinazo*). Jacinto es violento y agresivo, lo arregla todo por la fuerza, ya que su reclusión y falta de referencias familiares y, por tanto, históricas, le han impedido aprender a relacionarse. Sus valores morales no se corresponden con los que lo rodean. Como él mismo dice al ver su foto, el único recuerdo físico de su infancia que conserva: “Este soy yo. Salí borroso porque me moví” (del Toro, *El espinazo*). Ha perdido su pasado; Jacinto es un fantasma, un recuerdo borroso. Jacinto es un huérfano que está solo, no tiene ni un recuerdo en las fotos y, como siempre ha estado solo, la vida humana no tiene ningún valor para él. En el prólogo de la película se nos dice que un fantasma es “Un evento sostenido en el tiempo, como una fotografía borrosa”: Jacinto, como el capitán, es un fantasma, el fantasma de la guerra y el trauma, la carencia de pasado que corrompe el presente. De esta forma lo convierte en el verdadero monstruo. Estos dos monstruos humanos, en oposición a los monstruos irreales, son fantasmas. Como dice el prólogo de *El espinazo del diablo*, un fantasma es “un evento sostenido en el tiempo”, una persona sin historia que, al no tener pasado, ha perdido también su humanidad. Jacinto y el capitán son personajes que han perdido sus características humanas y se han convertido en fantasmas. Mucho más que fantasmas reales como Santi, Jacinto y Vidal son fantasmas porque no han dejado huella y porque no serán recordados; esto es lo que realmente los asusta. El capitán se encuentra obsesionado con el recuerdo de su padre y el estar a la altura, el saber que no tiene un pasado brillante ni será recordado como su progenitor. Jacinto no tiene ningún recuerdo de su vida, transcurrida en el orfanato, no conserva nada de su propia historia salvo una foto suya, en la que sale borroso. Ambos personajes se encuentran atormentados por carencias, por el miedo a que, cuando desaparezcan, nadie los recordará porque no han dejado huella. El hombre se caracteriza por sus recuerdos, y el que los pierde o no deja ninguno ha borrado su existencia, aun estando vivo, por lo que pierde su humanidad y se convierte en fantasma. El fantasma es un elemento liminal, y los hombres sin pasado no tienen futuro, ya que no serán recordados, no están a un lado ni al otro, se encuentran en un espacio

intermedio. Si no hay una prueba de su existencia no pueden ser reales, luego son fantasmas todavía estando vivos. Su pasado los hace reales, físicos y, al desaparecer, los hace vulnerables. Ambos personajes contrastan con el espíritu de Santi, el fantasma de la película, quien deja mucha más huella incluso muerto que ellos mismos estando vivos, ya que la gente lo recuerda y, por lo tanto, es menos fantasmagórico que ellos como humanos. Esto convierte a Vidal y Jacinto en los monstruos, ya que su falta de historia les hace perder una referencia moral que los integre dentro de un sistema social, y los lleva a sus acciones. El olvidar el pasado, su anulación, deshumaniza el contexto, y por ello, el controlar ese tiempo, ese pasado, proporciona poder.

Esa es precisamente una de las piezas claves de la memoria histórica en España: quien puede controlar la historia (sea para recuperarla o para borrarla), tendrá una influencia innegable en el presente. El pasado, el trauma y la historia son los lugares comunes entre ambas películas, representando así simbólicamente la eterna historia de las dos Españas y los problemas de la memoria histórica del país. Como se apuntaba anteriormente, ambas películas utilizan el “cine de género” para tratar, desde la evasión, un lugar común de las artes en la España del último siglo y, al mismo tiempo, representar el arquetipo universal del humano como monstruo. El tiempo y el pasado, son un símbolo de la actual obsesión de España con la memoria histórica. Como el país, Jacinto y Vidal sufren un trauma no superado, y se esfuerzan en mantener vivo el recuerdo para crear su propia identidad. España, por su parte, vive en un presente que intenta muchas veces esconder u ocultar la historia para superar ese trauma colectivo, pero la misma ausencia de esa huella termina de marcar al país. Ambas historias contienen elementos que, de forma metafórica, van a representar el trauma de la Guerra Civil y la posguerra. La obsesión con el pasado de sus villanos es una representación del espíritu general de las dos historias.

En el caso del *El laberinto del fauno*, toda la película se encuentra plagada de relaciones simbólicas entre el argumento y la realidad histórica del país. Al principio del film, dos hombres son capturados y ejecutados por salir a cazar conejos, lo cual representa la precaria situación de la España rural y el miedo del pueblo. Precisamente el conejo, ya utilizado por Saura en su clásica alegoría de la guerra de *La caza*, es a menudo presentado como símbolo de una España cazada y muerta: “This illustrates the unchecked brutality of Vidal’s rule and employs the image of the rabbits as a symbol of rural Spain devoured by totalitarianism, drawing from existing cinema to confront the horrors of the Civil War and its legacies” (Clark y McDonald 55). El mismo laberinto funciona como una imagen simbólica de la dictadura, una persecución sin escapatoria con un sacrificio final. El capitán Vidal como padre autoritario representa el régimen fascista. Su caída y negación suponen la superación y el proceso de transición. En la misma línea el sastre, el padre de Ofelia al que nunca llegamos a ver, es la personificación de la República, que es asesinada tras el golpe de estado y sustituida por el nuevo régimen dictatorial que representa Vidal, mientras que la madre de Ofelia, muerta con el nacimiento del niño, simboliza al sistema que había aceptado vivir bajo el régimen vendiendo su libertad por miedo y a cambio de su comodidad. Siguiendo este hilo, Ofelia es presentada como la España que sufre la guerra y la dictadura, y los que se sacrifican por el nacimiento de la nueva España. El bebé representa la esperanza. La niña es la metáfora de la lucha y el sacrificio de los españoles durante el régimen y la Transición hasta que esta acaba con el nacimiento y la supervivencia de un nuevo estado democrático, el hermano inocente por el que se sacrifica (Deaver 163). El hecho de que a Vidal se le niegue la voluntad al perder a su hijo (“ni siquiera sabrá tu nombre”, le dice Mercedes), representa el deseo de la España democrática de apartarse del fantasma de la guerra y la dictadura, de superar el trauma y, por lo tanto, derrocar al monstruo. De esta forma, negándole de nuevo el pasado y el recuerdo, el capitán se confirma como fantasma, y ya no es la amenaza que, como monstruo social, suponía. La negación de este pasado a la dictadura implica la recuperación de la memoria para los que perdieron, y reclama su derecho a recordar.

Los mismos tipos de símbolos son encontrados en *El espinazo del diablo*, otra película plagada de cicatrices y obsesión con el pasado, el miedo y trauma reales de los personajes que,

al mismo tiempo, todavía están viviendo la guerra. La bomba abandonada, nunca explotada y plantada en el patio del orfanato, recuerda a los personajes el peligro constante en el que viven, que en cualquier momento el conflicto puede volver a estallar, que pueden venir a por ellos. Sin embargo, no será la bomba (o la guerra) la que destruya el orfanato, sino el fuego provocado desde dentro; será el mismo sistema el que acabe con ellos, no la guerra en sí. El autor de la reseña en *100 European Horror Films* escribe, “The orphanage is haunted by the war, which has left behind a bomb which failed to explode in the main courtyard” (Schneider 69). La verdadera maldición del lugar y sus habitantes no es el fantasma del niño, sino el fantasma de la Guerra y de los recuerdos que trae. Los mismos personajes están llenos de cicatrices, tanto físicas (i.e., la pierna de Carmen o la impotencia del doctor Casares) como psicológicas (i.e., los niños abandonados y el rencor de Jacinto) y ponen énfasis en la trauma colectiva del país. *El espinazo del diablo* es una película sobre las cicatrices del dolor y los olvidados en los conflictos, los verdaderos fantasmas de las guerras.

La película abre buscando una respuesta a la pregunta clave: ¿qué es un fantasma? La idea del fantasma como recuerdo, como pasado no superado, como cicatriz, permanece durante toda la historia. No hablamos de fantasmas clásicos o de espíritus retornados, sino del fantasma como el dolor de un recuerdo. Este caso, el recuerdo es de la guerra o de un intermediario entre dos mundos. El fantasma es el mensajero o la cicatriz ficticia. Santi, el propio espíritu de la película, no es monstruo, sino víctima. El niño desfigurado, lleno de cicatrices, es un fantasma muy físico, totalmente corpóreo. Es tan real que él mismo no puede atravesar paredes, sino que necesita utilizar las puertas. Es una persona que ha dejado huella o cicatriz en oposición al olvidado Jacinto. Santi es una víctima no de la guerra, sino del dolor. Al mismo tiempo, la muerte de Santi es, de nuevo, un símbolo del pasado. En este caso se relaciona con el momento actual: con los recuerdos de la guerra cuando la película fue filmada. Santi muere en la alberca como, al final, le pasará a Jacinto también, pero el niño muere como un inocente asesinado del que su ejecutor no se preocupará y al que dejará allí, como los muertos en las cunetas, en referencia a los movimientos por la memoria histórica. Igual que lo fuera Santi, los niños abandonados representan otro aspecto de las consecuencias de la guerra; son cicatrices de la muerte de sus padres, abandonados o, como los fetos que guarda el Doctor Casares, conservados. Los cuerpos de lo que Casares llama “agua de limbo” son, según él mismo, “los niños que nunca deberían haber nacido, los hijos de nadie”, el dolor y la ilusión truncada almacenada entre dos mundos (del Toro, *El espinazo*). Los fetos son la falta de esperanza—la vida que nunca llegó—frente a los niños del orfanato, que sí son la esperanza del país tras la guerra. Los niños en la película son cicatrices vivientes; son las verdaderas víctimas de la guerra, los que murieron y los que no llegaron a nacer.

Así Jacinto, al igual que Vidal, es presentado como un fantasma por su falta de pasado en un entorno marcado, precisamente, por las cicatrices y el recuerdo. La representación del dolor en la película aparece a través de cicatrices simbólicas, convertidas en un fantasma que es, como se nos presenta desde el prólogo, “un evento condenado a repetirse”. De la misma forma, el fantasma de la guerra plantea la cicatriz del recuerdo sobre la sociedad española, y la desaparición de ese pasado no cierra esa herida, sino que monstrifica su efecto.

Guillermo del Toro creó en *El laberinto del fauno* y en *El espinazo del diablo* un mundo que permanece en el pasado o una realidad que vive del recuerdo y la memoria de las cicatrices dejadas por el dolor. Utilizando como recurso la fantasía y el terror, el director crea personajes imposibles disfrazados de monstruosidad, el elemento externo marcado por la diferencia que se identifica con el monstruo. Pero el monstruo real de del Toro es un monstruo social, un monstruo humano que, en su forma de villano, funciona como alegoría de la naturaleza humana y del momento representado. El capitán Vidal y Jacinto son los verdaderos monstruos de las historias. Apartándose de los mundos imaginarios a los que se enfrentan los protagonistas, los dos monstruos representan el terror hacia el verdadero enemigo: el propio ser humano.

Ambos monstruos responden a la pregunta de qué es un fantasma. Su falta de recuerdos y su imposibilidad de dejar huella en el presente los condena a una fantasmagórica falta de futuro y, de esta forma, pierden su humanidad a favor de la categoría de monstruo porque el que no tiene un pasado agoniza en su presente y condena su futuro.

NOTAS

¹ Se entiende como “cine de género” aquel perteneciente a géneros minoritarios tradicionalmente marginados por la crítica y la industria, como el terror y la ciencia ficción.

² Jacinto mata a Santi, pero el capitán se ajusta a las leyes del momento después de que su bando ganase la guerra, por lo que sus crímenes no conllevarían una pena judicial.

³ A partir de aquí utilizaré las grafías “otro” para referirme al sujeto identificado como diferente, y Otro para tratar el concepto de la otredad en sí.

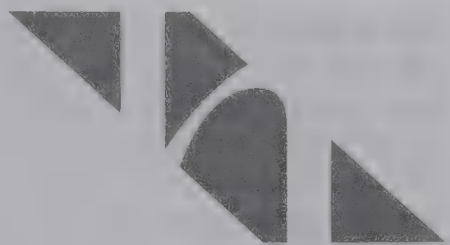
⁴ No hay que olvidar que en Estados Unidos (centro de interés de Wood y Derry) los directores que trabajan en los 1960 son los que fueron víctimas de la segunda Guerra Mundial en su niñez y testigos adultos de Vietnam en los 60.

⁵ Por otro lado, es también cuando el país comienza a desarrollar una industria cinematográfica, en los años 90, y a crear un mercado que puede consumir unos productos de géneros que, en otros periodos de su historia, no tendrían aceptación del público.

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El teatro español sobre la inmigración en los años 90: Influencia mediática y procesos creativos



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Resumen: El presente ensayo lleva a cabo un recorrido por el primer teatro español sobre la inmigración y la xenofobia publicado y estrenado en los años 90 del pasado siglo. Se parte de un abundante material hemerográfico y de las reseñas críticas publicadas en la prensa periódica sobre los estrenos, para analizar la relación de este teatro con las realidades mostradas en aquellos mismos años por los medios de comunicación, donde la inmigración de las pateras y los ataques racistas contra la población extranjera recibían una amplia cobertura. El tratamiento de la información en los medios de comunicación de masas se convirtió en un importante motor para la inspiración y para la creación teatral de un nutrido grupo de jóvenes autores y autoras que en la actualidad cuentan con sobrado reconocimiento y prestigio. Asimismo, se ofrece una aproximación a la doble vertiente ética y estética de este teatro, mostrando a través de los comentarios de sus autores y autoras cómo afrontaron sus creaciones con la intención de llevar al público hacia la reflexión y el cambio de los modelos identitarios, sirviéndose para ello de fórmulas dramáticas y lenguajes expresivos innovadores.

Palabras clave: drama, identity/identidad, immigration/inmigración, mass media/medios de comunicación, racism/racismo, reception/recepción, Spain/España, theater/teatro, twentieth century/siglo XX

La crisis económica y la elevada tasa de desempleo han ocasionado que hablar de España como país de inmigración no sea lo mismo hoy que hace tan solo cuatro años, cuando todavía se trataba de un fenómeno en crecimiento. A partir de 2012, tal y como han venido mostrando los datos del Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), el saldo migratorio ha sido negativo, es decir, que el número de personas—españolas y extranjeras—que abandonan el país está superando al número de personas que inmigra o regresa desde otros países.¹ No obstante, la España multicultural del presente es muy diferente a la de hace cincuenta años. En julio de 2014 la población extranjera residente ascendía a 4.583.503 personas, lo que equivale a un 9,77 % de la población total (INE 1). Esta inmigración, hoy mitigada por la crisis, comenzó a aumentar de forma notable a partir de los años 80 y muy especialmente durante los 90. De hecho, en 1986 y en 1992 tuvieron lugar los primeros procesos de regularización extraordinaria de inmigrantes. El de 1992 fue mucho más amplio y multitudinario que el anterior (Gregorio Gil 43), revelando la importancia que el colectivo inmigrante estaba adquiriendo.

La inmigración en el teatro de los 90: Un recorrido escénico

La escena teatral ha sido muy sensible a los cambios vividos por la sociedad española en las últimas décadas y ha mostrado, desde sus inicios, miradas diversas sobre la inmigración en España. A partir de los años 90 jóvenes autores y autoras de teatro que hoy cuentan con reconocido prestigio, junto con algunas de las figuras más emblemáticas de la escena y la dirección teatral, comienzan a reflejar los aspectos más dramáticos de dicha inmigración, planteando problemáticas asociadas tanto a la vida de las personas migrantes como a las reacciones de

la sociedad de acogida ante su presencia. En este ensayo llevaré a cabo una aproximación a la influencia de los medios de comunicación en la selección de los temas y a la consideración que los autores y la crítica teatral tienen sobre los procesos creativos de este primer teatro sobre la inmigración, estrenado y publicado en los años 90, con el fin de dilucidar cómo se produjeron los antecedentes de una temática de alcance social que seguirá desarrollándose durante las décadas siguientes. Prestaré una mayor atención a los textos dramáticos que han sido llevados a escena, dado que la publicación de reseñas críticas, programas de mano y entrevistas con los autores y autoras en la prensa, proporciona abundante material para el análisis de estos aspectos.

La temporada teatral de 1992-93 constituye el punto de partida de este repaso escénico, pues se produce entonces la puesta en escena de dos textos dramáticos protagonizados por inmigrantes africanos que ven España como tierra de promisión: *La mirada del hombre oscuro*, de Ignacio del Moral, estrenada bajo la dirección de Ernesto Caballero en la Sala Olimpia de Madrid el 8 de enero de 1993, y *La orilla rica*, de Encarna de las Heras, dirigida por Luis Castilla y estrenada en la Sala Cuarta Pared de Madrid el 21 de mayo de 1993. Aunque me voy a centrar en la producción de autores y autoras españoles, cabe señalar asimismo el estreno de *Passport*, del venezolano Gustavo Ott, el 4 de marzo de 1993, también en la Sala Cuarta Pared, bajo la dirección de Javier García Yagüe. En este caso se trata de un drama de corte kafkiano en el que se problematiza el (des)encuentro con el Otro en unas coordenadas espaciotemporales imprecisas, que no se concretan en la realidad española, sino que cobran una dimensión universal.

Tras el estreno de estas obras, se sucedieron otras puestas en escena y publicaciones de obras dramáticas que, de la mano de algunos de los representantes más significativos del teatro español de las últimas décadas, abordaron temáticas migratorias. En 1995 se publica *Sudaca*, de Miguel Murillo, un texto en el que la inmigración viene motivada por la persecución política, aunque su protagonista, el argentino Rolando, se encuentra con una xenofobia y unos problemas administrativos similares en el intento de normalizar su situación. Jerónimo López Mozo recibe el Premio Tirso de Molina de 1996 y el Nacional de Literatura Dramática de 1998 por *Ahlán*, donde se plantea nuevamente el tema de la inmigración de las pateras y las dificultades de un joven inmigrante marroquí, una vez llegado a España. Esta obra fue representada como lectura dramatizada el 9 de junio de 1997 en el Estudio Karpas de Madrid, bajo la dirección de Julio Pascual.

Cuatro nuevos montajes se producen en 1997, casi todos ellos centrados en las reacciones de la sociedad de acogida frente a la inmigración, con una especial atención a la violencia racista de bandas neonazis. En primer lugar, se estrena *Lista negra* (25 abr. 1997, Teatro Salón Cervantes, Alcalá de Henares), de Yolanda Pallín, con dirección de Eduardo Vasco. Se trata del primer texto dramático protagonizado por cabezas rapadas. Unos meses después, sube a los escenarios *Bazar* (22 ago. 1997, Teatro San Luis de Gonzaga, Puerto de Santa María, dirección de Francisco Vidal), de David Planell, obra en la que se plantea el tema de la pérdida identitaria a través de un personaje marroquí, ya asentado en la sociedad española. Ignacio del Moral vuelve a llevar a escena las peripecias de unos inmigrantes en *Rey negro* (18 sept. 1997, Teatro Olimpia de Madrid, dirección de Eduardo Vasco), obra que transcurre en el contexto marginal de los "sin techo" de una gran ciudad. Por último, José Luis Alonso de Santos estrena *Salvajes* (28 nov. 1997, Teatro Juan Bravo de Segovia, dirección de Gerardo Malla), donde el protagonismo recae nuevamente en los cabezas rapadas.

Otra obra que se puede circunscribir al año 1997 es la pieza breve *La falsa muerte de Jaro el Negro*, de Fernando Martín Iniesta, aunque no fue publicada hasta 2004 (Serrano 79). No obstante, en ella reaparece la violencia racista de los cabezas rapadas. El mismo tema se desarrolla en *Mane, Thecel, Phares* (15 mar. 1999, lectura dramatizada, SGAE, Madrid, dirección de Eduardo Vasco), de Borja Ortiz de Gondra, publicada en 1998; en *Cachorros de negro mirar* (7 ene. 1999, Sala Cuarta Pared, dirección de Aitana Galán), de Paloma Pedrero y en la obra en un acto *Mongo, Boso, Rosco, N'Goe . . . oniyá* (1999), de Alberto Miralles.

Todas estas obras comparten la característica de plantear las repercusiones sociales del fenómeno migratorio en España, centrando unas veces el foco de atención en la dureza del viaje

migratorio y en las dificultades del día a día en el país de destino y, otras veces, cuestionando las actitudes de la sociedad española y denunciando la irrupción del racismo más extremo y violento. En total, nos hallamos ante una docena de textos dramáticos que se identifican por su temática social y su estética innovadora y que, además, han sido escritos por autores y autoras de reconocido prestigio.

A partir del año 2000, se puede observar una evolución en el teatro sobre la inmigración hacia una mayor diversidad temática, con la que se pone de manifiesto el papel que comienza a jugar la población inmigrante en los espacios cotidianos. La convivencia y el contacto intercultural generan nuevos planteamientos dramáticos, más allá del impacto inicial que tuvieron las trágicas noticias sobre las pateras y la violencia racista. En consecuencia, muchas creaciones comienzan a llamar la atención sobre las dificultades de la integración social de los inmigrantes y las actitudes xenófobas presentes en la vida cotidiana, con las que el público se puede identificar en mayor medida.² Si, como indica Mary Nash, “la imagen del Otro se consolida a partir de una representación mental, de un imaginario colectivo y registros culturales que enuncien o reafirmen las diferencias” (23), el esfuerzo invertido por los creadores y creadoras dramáticos para ampliar, matizar y humanizar las informaciones vertidas en los medios de comunicación constituye una importante vía para combatir los prejuicios xenófobos y construir una sociedad más proclive al entendimiento intercultural.

Influencia mediática en la selección de los temas

En su temprano estudio del teatro español sobre la inmigración, Marco Kunz ya ponía en evidencia el impacto de los medios de comunicación sobre esta parcela creativa: “Muchos de los textos literarios españoles sobre la inmigración parten de uno de estos hechos reales ‘dramáticos’: los autores señalan fotos o artículos de prensa como fuente de inspiración, aluden a noticias periodísticas o crean personajes relacionados con los medios de comunicación (periodistas, fotógrafos, etc.)” (217). Los discursos y las imágenes difundidas a través de los medios de comunicación se convierten de esta manera en el principal motor de los procesos creativos.³ La influencia que dichos discursos tienen sobre la percepción de la inmigración por parte de la propia sociedad es obvia, por lo que, en muchos casos, los autores y autoras de teatro realizan una lectura crítica con el fin de luchar contra la xenofobia y el racismo, buscando un cambio en la percepción social de la inmigración.⁴

Las noticias sobre el cruce de inmigrantes en pateras por el Estrecho de Gibraltar constituyen una de las realidades más visibilizadas de la inmigración en España. A pesar de no ser la forma de acceso al país más multitudinaria, sí es la que genera un mayor dramatismo. Por ello, no es extraño que las primeras aproximaciones teatrales a la inmigración producidas en los años 90 prestaran una especial atención a la experiencia del periplo migratorio en patera. Es el caso de *La mirada del hombre oscuro* y *La orilla rica*. Tanto Ignacio del Moral como Encarna de las Heras reconocen haberse inspirado en sendas noticias de la prensa periódica. Itziar Pascual, en su reseña crítica al estreno de *La mirada del hombre oscuro*, señala que “fue precisamente la imagen de un reportaje, a finales de 1990, lo que llevó a este autor donostiarra a escribir sobre los inmigrantes arriesgados—las autoridades los denominan ‘ilegales’—en España” (“Esa oscura”). También Jerónimo López Mozo, en su reseña sobre *La orilla rica*, advierte sobre la existencia de un pretexto creativo de origen periodístico:

Pablo Ordaz publicó en las páginas de *El País* un breve reportaje en el que relataba la aventura de una joven marroquí de dieciocho años que, después de cruzar el Estrecho en una patera, fue detenida por la Guardia Civil y devuelta a su lugar de origen. Poco podía imaginar el periodista que, leído por las gentes de la Cuarta Pared, serviría de punto de partida de uno de los más bellos espectáculos teatrales vistos en los escenarios madrileños durante los últimos meses. (“La orilla” 22)

En el texto de una conferencia titulada “Emigrantes y exiliados en mi teatro”, Jerónimo López Mozo se refiere asimismo al papel relevante de la información mediática a la hora de concebir la creación de *Ahlán*, texto dramático de su autoría protagonizado por un joven marroquí. La relevancia de los medios de comunicación, en este caso, no se concreta en la inspiración generada por un único titular, sino que es fruto de la reflexión generada tras observar el carácter—unas veces inocente y otras xenófobo—de las opiniones vertidas en la prensa ante un fenómeno todavía incipiente:

Por una parte, raro era el día en que la prensa no informaba de la detención, por parte de la Guardia Civil, de grupos de magrebíes sorprendidos al pisar las playas del sur o del naufragio de esas endeble embarcaciones llamadas pateras, con la correspondiente siembra de cadáveres en el mar. Titulares como “Soñando la orilla rica”, “La costa del azar”, “Cementerio marino” o “Los tiburones comen corderos” resumían, a veces con tintes poéticos, las ansias de los desesperados viajeros y el amargo destino de muchos de ellos. Otras noticias advertían de lo que nos esperaba si no se ponía fin al trasiego humano. “El número de inmigrantes magrebíes se duplicará en los próximos cinco años”, “Los que ahora viajan son hombres jóvenes y solteros. Lo peor llegará con la reagrupación familiar”, “La presión demográfica en África del Norte, unida al paro, el peso de la deuda y la fuerte inflación, es un peligro para España”, “La invasión que hace temblar a Europa”, “Es necesario endurecer las leyes para impedir la avalancha de ciudadanos extranjeros”, “La presencia de extranjeros aumenta en progresión geométrica”, “La invasión que padecemos es políticamente desestabilizadora”. (“Emigrantes”)

Al mismo tiempo que los medios de comunicación informaban sobre la llegada de pateras a las costas españolas y las trágicas muertes sucedidas en el Estrecho, se producen los primeros casos de violencia racista. Su irrupción es difícil de determinar, si bien algunos autores la sitúan en torno a mediados de los años 80 (Ibarra 45). Su repercusión en la prensa se hace evidente a principios de los 90, cuando tienen lugar los primeros asesinatos a manos de personas y bandas de orientación neonazi. La primera víctima mortal fue Lucrecia Pérez, joven dominicana asesinada el 13 de enero de 1992 en Aravaca, un barrio madrileño en el que se habían producido ya numerosas manifestaciones xenófobas.⁵ Los medios de comunicación se hicieron eco de esta agresión racista, generándose una alarma social en relación con el surgimiento de grupos de jóvenes violentos, identificados estética e ideológicamente con las bandas neonazis de *skin heads* o cabezas rapadas, que se estaban expandiendo por Europa (Costa).

Esta violencia racista de ideología neonazi se convierte rápidamente en motivo de denuncia y reflexión teatral. Nuevamente es López Mozo quien indica la influencia de los medios de comunicación en el ámbito creativo, aludiendo a cómo “las hazañas de los cabezas rapadas comenzaron a ocupar tantas páginas como los sucesos del Estrecho. A la voz de ‘muerte al moro!’, las agresiones al ‘otro’ se hicieron frecuentes” (“Emigrantes”). De hecho, el autor introduce en *Ahlán* escenas de violencia racista, aunque el primer estreno teatral en el que se da protagonismo pleno a este tema es *Lista negra*, de Yolanda Pallín. Según declaraba la autora en el momento de su estreno: “aunque se nos haya olvidado ya, hace unos cuantos meses hubo un aluvión de noticias sobre la cuestión. *Lista negra* nace de la indignación” (Luna 23).

Otro texto inspirado en un caso concreto divulgado a través de la prensa, es *Rey negro* (también conocido como *Boniface y el rey de Ruanda*), de Ignacio del Moral. El protagonista de la obra es Kigali, rey de Ruanda que vive en el exilio y la mendicidad de una gran ciudad junto con su fiel secretario, Boniface. La idea de la obra “nació de una crónica que leyó Del Moral en *El Mundo* sobre la peripecia vital del rey de Ruanda, Kigali, que, lejos de su patria, sobrellevaba un exilio en otra selva, la de la sociedad norteamericana, viviendo de la caridad” (Amestoy).

Otros autores se refieren también a sus creaciones como una reacción necesaria contra el ambiente de violencia que observan en la sociedad. José Luis Alonso de Santos trata de buscar en *Salvajes* el trasfondo de esa violencia: “algo huele a podrido en esta sociedad de fin de milenio, que es una sociedad de lobos con piel de cordero, disfrazada de buenas palabras y sensaciones

maravillosas pero que rascas un poquito y es salvaje” (Perales). Borja Ortiz de Gondra, por su parte, describe *Mane, Thecel, Phares* como una obra que “trata de la intolerancia que hay aquí y ahora y de la imposibilidad de vivir en un ambiente de violencia” (Bravo 109).

A pesar de que no cuento para todos los casos con declaraciones de los autores y autoras aludiendo a esa inspiración concreta en noticias publicadas en la prensa, a menudo es la crítica teatral la que establece una conexión entre las temáticas abordadas y las noticias que aparecen en los medios. Matteini parte de dicho contexto en su comentario sobre *Mane, Thecel, Phares*, de Borja Ortiz de Gondra: “¿Es posible reflexionar poéticamente sobre la violencia cuando las noticias de su barbarie irrumpen a diario en los medios de un país?” (79). Igualmente ocurre con *Cachorros de negro mirar*, que, según la reseña de Pérez Rasilla, aborda “sin prejuicios un fenómeno preocupante que con demasiada frecuencia ocupa las portadas de los periódicos” (37). Con relación a *Mongo, Boso, Rosco, N’Goe . . . oniyá*, de Alberto Miralles, Santolaria se manifiesta de manera similar, señalando que el autor “se acerca a los sucesos protagonizados por los *skin* con una mirada implacable, que no admite fáciles justificaciones ni excusas autoexculpatorias” (90). En este panorama sobre el teatro de la inmigración y la xenofobia de los años 90, cabe recordar también *El traductor de Blumemberg* (28 mar. 1994, lectura dramatizada, Teatro María Guerrero), de Juan Mayorga, obra en la que se plantea el peligro de la propagación y expansión de las ideas neonazis en Europa (Zatlin).

El estreno de *Bazar* (22 ago. 1997), de David Planell, supone un caso aparte en la década y anticipa la diversidad temática que tendrá lugar a partir del año 2000. Si lo comparamos con los otros textos de los años 90, en los que el foco recae, fundamentalmente, sobre las experiencias trágicas de las pateras y la violencia neonazi, *Bazar* supone un paso más allá, al dirigir la mirada hacia la problemática identitaria del inmigrante en relación con su integración social, más explorada en el teatro español a medida que la sociedad comienza a ser consciente de las implicaciones de la convivencia intercultural. La obra trata sobre el ansia de adaptación de un hombre marroquí, que le lleva a renegar de su propia identidad. La idea de la obra surge, según indica Planell, de una conversación que escuchó en el multiétnico barrio madrileño de Lavapiés: “En la mesa de al lado había un marroquí joven de unos treinta años que estaba intentando convencer a un español del barrio para hacer un vídeo para televisión” (Jaramillo 12). La obra se inspira, por lo tanto, en la realidad observada en el contacto cotidiano con ese mundo intercultural, y no, como en los casos anteriores, en las trágicas noticias publicadas en los medios. Esto provoca un giro en el centro de atención del drama, donde se muestran el ambiente de convivencia intercultural y los obstáculos que la población inmigrante encuentra en el día a día.

Procesos creativos: Contenido social y renovación de los lenguajes expresivos

En líneas generales, las puestas en escena de todas estas obras dramáticas tuvieron una buena acogida por parte de la prensa, que coincide en destacar el carácter novedoso y comprometido de los textos, íntimamente ligado a la realidad social del momento. Este aspecto era especialmente resaltado en las reseñas, debido a que existía un cierto desencanto en algunos sectores de la crítica teatral, que percibía un predominio de un teatro costumbrista y de evasión, cuando no de un teatro postmoderno y de imagen, que en esos primeros años de la década de los 90 parecía estar dando paso a otras tendencias más cercanas a temáticas sociales (Floeck). En este sentido, ante el estreno de *La mirada del hombre oscuro*, Enrique Centeno se refería al regreso a un teatro comprometido con la realidad: “enterrada la escena en un teatro evasivista y costumbrista, como se encuentra desde hace un par de décadas con muy escasas excepciones, el hecho podría abrir una ilusión a que nuestros creadores se decidan por fin a tomar como material dramático lo que de verdad esperaba el espectador que se ha ido perdiendo”. Con respecto al mismo estreno, Leopoldo Alas señalaba que “quizás el teatro empiece a prescindir por fin de los refritos culturales, a dejar de lado los homenajes retro, los guiños vacuos a la postmodernidad, para volver su mirada al presente”. Miguel Medina Vicario, por su parte, consideraba que “el teatro y la sociedad que lo

sustenta necesitan espectáculos que dejen testimonio histórico del atorbellinado momento que ambos soportan. Y lo necesitan incluso por encima de las apetencias de ambos” (20).

Tal y como se puede observar, la crítica teatral se refiere constantemente al valor testimonial de este teatro frente a la realidad, destacando, por ejemplo, que *La mirada del hombre oscuro* lleva a escena un tema de “palpitante actualidad” (Galindo, “La mirada” 81); que *La orilla rica* es “una obra muy actual” (Hera) o de una “actualidad candente” (Caballero 84); que *Mane, Thecel, Phares* es una pieza “absolutamente contemporánea” (Bravo 109); o que *Cachorros de negro mirar* muestra “un problema que está en la calle” (Vizcaíno). Acompañando a estos comentarios, se hallan otros referidos al carácter comprometido e incluso de denuncia social de estos textos, denuncia que identifican por el hecho de que muestran una cara poco amable de la realidad.

Pero, ¿cuáles fueron los motivos que impulsaron a estos escritores a emprender el proceso de creación teatral? ¿Su percepción coincide con la de los críticos? En algunos casos sí, pero las intenciones de los creadores y creadoras dramáticos van más allá. A menudo destacan la intención de cuestionar los modelos identitarios de la propia sociedad de acogida. Ignacio del Moral, por ejemplo, comenta en una entrevista que con *La mirada del hombre oscuro* pretendió reflejar “la actitud de la sociedad ante lo desconocido, frente a lo que llega de fuera” (Galindo, “Ignacio” 74), y en el programa de mano, afirma que “hace ya mucho que el teatro no sirve para cambiar la sociedad”, aunque se muestra convencido de que “nuestro deber como hombres de teatro es ofrecer a quienes nos contemplan materia de reflexión sobre sí mismos, sobre la sociedad que todos componemos, sobre el mundo deslumbrante y aterrador que entre todos estamos construyendo” (Galindo, “La mirada” 75). De una forma similar, Jerónimo López Mozo afirma que su intención al escribir *Ahlán* era “mostrar sin maniqueísmo algunos aspectos de la inmigración”, sin por ello “actuar sobre la conciencia de los espectadores”, puesto que su finalidad última sería desvelar los resortes xenófobos que actúan en el encuentro con “gentes pertenecientes a diversas culturas” (“Emigrantes”), dirigiéndose, por lo tanto, hacia la indagación de la identidad propia:

Al escribir la pieza, no me movía la solicitud de conmiseración y lástima hacia los inmigrantes. La cuestión es otra. La cuestión es que, ante el fenómeno de la inmigración, nos comportamos como bárbaros. La cuestión es que hemos de recuperar el espíritu que, en otros tiempos, presidió la convivencia, en nuestro país, de gentes pertenecientes a diversas culturas. Para ello hay que volver la vista atrás y releer nuestra historia. También, recordar la tradición migratoria de nuestro pueblo. Luego, mostrar al intransigente la realidad actual, obligarle a que deje de ver a esas gentes anónimas que cruzan nuestras fronteras como intrusos. No vienen por capricho. Razones muy poderosas mueven a las personas a dejar sus casas y emprender andaduras azarosas. La necesidad las empuja. (López Mozo, “Emigrantes”)

La contradicción existente en las palabras de López Mozo, su intención de no actuar sobre la mente de los espectadores, pero, a pesar de ello, *obligar al intransigente a dejar de ver al inmigrante como un intruso*, resulta reveladora. La voluntad de los creadores dramáticos de llevar al público lector o espectador a reflexionar sobre sus propias actitudes y reacciones ante el encuentro con el Otro y, muy especialmente, sobre aquellos comportamientos de carácter xenófobo—o, en palabras de López Mozo, “bárbaro”—, forma parte de un proceso general de indagación en la identidad colectiva española, presente en el teatro español contemporáneo, que, en el caso concreto del teatro sobre la inmigración, se dirige a construir una identidad propicia a la convivencia intercultural.⁶

En el caso de *Lista negra*, de Yolanda Pallín, la intención de implicar al público en el escenario de violencia dramatizado, se puso de manifiesto en la misma puesta en escena, a través de la configuración del espacio dramático. El montaje, de Eduardo Vasco, le brindó al público “la posibilidad de participar en un espectáculo del que se es testigo, juez y parte”. Para ello, se recurrió a un escenario “sin espacios cerrados, sin butacas, en el que el público sigue la

representación entre los propios actores” (Pascual, “El sonido” 43). La autora se refiere, además, a la función del teatro como revulsivo para la sociedad, señalando que con su obra pretendía mostrar una realidad de manera objetiva, con la finalidad de provocar la reflexión del público y, en consecuencia, su reacción ante los hechos mostrados (en este caso, contra la violencia racista):

He intentado—continúa Pallín—ser muy objetiva. Pero mi objetividad parte de mi posición. Quiero ser un espejo de lo que ocurre en la calle para que la gente tome postura. Los cinco episodios que se cuentan ya son lo bastante fuertes como para sancionarlos desde la misma historia; debe ser el público el que reaccione y critique. Me han llegado a decir que a algunos ultras podría gustarles la representación. Creo que no. La perspectiva está clara. Y desde luego yo paso de dar la charla. (Luna 23).

Al igual que ocurría con los comentarios de Ignacio del Moral o los de Jerónimo López Mozo, se observa una cierta contradicción implícita en las palabras de la autora, que habla de una intencionalidad objetiva, pero, a la vez, consciente de que ante los hechos mostrados en la obra es inevitable posicionarse, admite que en su propuesta dramática existe una “perspectiva clara” que el público debe desentrañar. Eduardo Vasco, que en el momento en que se representaba su montaje de *Lista negra* lleva a escena también *Rey negro*, de Ignacio del Moral, observa que a pesar de que “hay diferencias muy grandes en el plano del estilo”, “trasciende un objetivo social y político muy parecido” en ambos textos dramáticos (Pascual, “Ignacio”).

En *Lista negra*, además de la intencionalidad ética y de la ruptura del espacio escénico con la que se implica al público en el drama, destaca el carácter renovador de las fórmulas expresivas utilizadas. Pallín se sirve de un lenguaje directo, expresado a través de frases cortas y con total carencia de signos de puntuación. Las constantes repeticiones de expresiones dotan al texto de cierto sentido rítmico, potenciado por la introducción de pausas internas marcadas por espacios en blanco (Lax 23–24). Según afirma la autora en una reseña de la prensa, su propuesta dramática trata de conectar con el público actual mediante esa renovación formal y la ruptura de la secuenciación de la acción: “Los parámetros realistas no me sirven para nada. La linealidad del principio, nudo y desenlace se queda chica. Hay otras propuestas que están más cerca de la visión y de la mente del espectador actual y creo que hay que ofrecerlas al público” (Luna). De esta manera, Pallín se sirve de una estética alejada de las formas dramáticas convencionales para llevar a cabo su denuncia de la violencia racista.

Otras autoras también han tenido muy en cuenta las reacciones del público a la hora de encarar sus creaciones. Paloma Pedrero se refiere, en relación con *Cachorros de negro mirar*, a la función social del teatro, que considera capaz de promover un cambio de actitudes en los espectadores: “Nadie sale igual después de haberla visto. Cuando alguien escribe una obra de teatro intenta cambiar las cosas, modificarlas de alguna manera. No se sabe si se consigue, pero creo que con *Cachorros de negro mirar* se cuestionan muchos sentimientos, emociones e ideas” (López Rejas). Según indica en el prólogo a la primera edición, su obra nació del planteamiento de una serie de preguntas: “¿de dónde nace esa violencia? ¿Cómo se gesta? ¿Cuándo estalla?” (Pedrero 9–10), y su intención no fue “analizar ni psicológica ni sociológicamente el problema”, sino “meterme en la piel de los personajes, conectar con mi propia violencia y llevarla hasta las últimas consecuencias” (10).

Borja Ortiz de Gondra, que comparte esa misma visión social del teatro, afirma en una entrevista sobre *Mane, Thecel, Phares* que “no están los tiempos como para hacer un teatro de entretenimiento. Tenemos la necesidad de saber qué pasa, y el teatro debe dar voz a la gente que no tiene voz . . . En los noventa se ha vuelto al teatro de texto en contraposición al teatro visual que se practicó en los ochenta. Es una necesidad social . . . Pero existe una ventaja, y es que a este teatro de texto le hemos incorporado todos los lenguajes visuales” (Bravo 109). Así pues, el autor afronta su creación conjugando el compromiso social con la renovación estética. *Mane, Thecel, Phares* supone una indagación en el tema de “la intolerancia y la dificultad de vivir en

la diferencia” (Iniesta 9) a través de escenas de un notable lirismo y carácter fragmentario, en las que las diversas experiencias de los personajes, algunos de corte simbólico, se entrecruzan. Según declara el autor, escribe como si de una “composición musical” se tratase: “tengo un tema, y sobre ese tema surgen variaciones” (Pallín 75).

También la comedia se afronta con un afán comprometido, rompiendo algunos convencionalismos del género con el fin de llevar al público hacia una reflexión profunda sobre los prejuicios xenófobos. Es el caso de *Salvajes*, de José Luis Alonso de Santos, y *Bazar*, de David Planell. Alonso de Santos afirma en el programa de mano que su intención es hablar de la violencia de los jóvenes cabezas rapadas “y del particular drama que viven sus familias”. Para ello, recurre a la comedia agrídulce, buscando reflejar “el humor y la tragedia cotidiana que rodea nuestras vidas”. La crítica periodística interpretó la obra como “un corte en la realidad” (Gil), aunque hubo algunas voces discordantes, que la tacharon de ser “perfectamente previsible” (Gómez Municio) y “fallida” (Aranda). Las relaciones del teatro con la realidad social y la provocación que para algunas personas puede suponer que la crítica del racismo sea llevada a los escenarios, se pusieron de manifiesto ante la reacción que despertó el estreno de esta obra en Madrid, marcado por la aparición de amenazas y mensajes neonazis en la fachada del Teatro Maravillas (ABC).

La obra de David Planell, *Bazar*, es presentada en una reseña de forma similar, como una “áspera e incómoda comedia” (G. D. M. 36). El propio autor la define como una “comedia atípica” (Aguilera, Cabal, Moral, Guimaraes, y Planell 20). Según su opinión, “la comedia es una indagación en la desdicha de los personajes. Y en el teatro de hoy nadie se asombra de que una comedia termine mal, porque los géneros ya no son como antes, de una pieza” (21). Planell obtuvo con *Bazar* el Segundo Premio de Teatro de Comedias “Hogar Sur” y, de cara a su estreno por la productora Pentación, realizó una serie de cambios con el fin de suavizar y atenuar el drama de los personajes:

Alonso de Santos, que estaba en el jurado, me cogió aparte y me dijo: mira, la obra está muy bien, al jurado le ha gustado mucho, pero este final tan amargo, tan desesperanzado . . . ¿qué te parece si le das una vuelta a ese final y encuentras algo un poco más amable, más cómodo, más para irte a casa más tranquilo? Y yo como era joven y tenía muchas ganas de estrenar la obra y me parecía un regalo haber sido premiado, pues cambié el final y lo hice más esperanzado. Y no me arrepiento, se estrenó así y ya está. Pero luego he tenido la oportunidad de hacer ese montaje . . . y me he encargado de volver al original, menos cómodo, más áspero, pero que de verdad cuenta lo que yo quería contar. (Aguilera et al. 20)

Como aclara Planell en este comentario, para los posteriores montajes de *Bazar* recuperó la versión original del texto. El más reciente ha sido dirigido por él mismo en 2014 en el marco de SURGE, la nueva Muestra de Creación Escénica Madrileña (Caruana).

Otra fórmula expresiva destacable es la autorreferencialidad. En *La falsa muerte de Jaro el Negro*, Martín Iniesta hace uso de un juego metateatral (Serrano 79) para reflexionar acerca de la (im)posibilidad que brinda el teatro para ofrecer unas imágenes que impacten en la conciencia del público. Tras el violento asesinato del protagonista inmigrante, la figura del autor irrumpe en el escenario para aludir al falso espejismo de realidad que se crea durante toda representación dramática y señalar, con ironía, que “el amable público que ha sentido horror, mucho horror y piedad, mucha piedad por la desgracia que aquí se ha representado se merece olvidar tu historia” (Martín Iniesta 134). En *Mongo, Boso, Rosco, N’Goe . . . oniyá*, de Alberto Miralles, se muestra también en el formato del teatro breve un ataque violento contra un inmigrante guineano que dice ser un brujo. Miralles recurre al cambio de roles para situar a uno de los agresores en el papel de víctima. Por momentos, el agresor experimenta la perspectiva del “Otro”, sin que por ello se produzca una modificación en su conducta, pues tras salir de su mágica ensoñación seguirá ejerciendo la misma violencia.

Por último, cabe destacar la preferencia que muchos autores y autoras muestran por el monólogo. *La orilla rica*, *Lista Negra* y *Sudaca* están contruidos a partir de esta forma teatral. En

Sudaca, de Miguel Murillo, se nos presenta “un intenso y dramático monólogo . . . que transmite a través de un interesante lenguaje coloquial, plagado de giros idiomáticos argentinos llenos de frescura, la tragedia de un pueblo, al que la dictadura militar sumió en un clima de represión y violencia” (Vilches de Frutos 504). El protagonista se refiere a la precariedad de su vida en España, donde lleva quince años viviendo, revelando las situaciones xenófobas en las que se ha visto envuelto y explicando los motivos que le forzaron a abandonar su país.

Como se puede observar, los creadores y creadoras dramáticos parecen estar de acuerdo en la intención de mostrar una realidad que les preocupa en los escenarios, aunque la mayoría opinan que sus obras no pueden contribuir a cambiar la sociedad a la que se dirigen. Sin embargo, en sus textos tienden a justificar los motivos que impulsan a sus personajes a emigrar y, en otros casos, ponen en evidencia la xenofobia y el racismo imperante en la sociedad y la ignorancia y el desconocimiento que provocan tales actitudes, mostrándolas siempre desde una perspectiva crítica. A pesar de que la recepción de estas obras teatrales depende, en muchos casos, de factores externos al texto, tanto los temas seleccionados como su tratamiento se dirigen a promover una serie de cambios en la sociedad, apuntando nuevas formas de entender y representar al “Otro”, destapando los prejuicios xenófobos presentes en los discursos de los medios de comunicación y la vida política y cotidiana, y proponiendo, finalmente, imágenes, valores e ideas propicios para la igualdad.

Conclusiones

En los años 90 comienzan a estrenarse y publicarse textos dramáticos sobre la inmigración en España. Los autores y autoras de teatro y la crítica ocupada de dar cuenta de la recepción de las obras, revelan la relación estrecha de este primer teatro sobre la inmigración con el tratamiento que los medios de comunicación otorgaban a sus más trágicas facetas: la tentativa de cruzar el Estrecho de Gibraltar en patera y la irrupción de la violencia racista de los cabezas rapadas. Esta vinculación temática es reconocida por algunos autores que admiten haberse inspirado en noticias, reportajes y fotografías difundidas en los medios de comunicación: Ignacio del Moral (*La mirada del hombre oscuro* y *Rey negro*), Encarna de las Heras (*La orilla rica*), Jerónimo López Mozo (*Ahlán*) y Yolanda Pallín (*Lista negra*). José Luis Alonso de Santos (*Salvajes*), Fernando Martín Iniesta (*La falsa muerte de Jaro el negro*), Borja Ortiz de Gondra (*Mane, Thecel, Phares*), Paloma Pedrero (*Cachorros de negro mirar*) y Alberto Miralles (*Mongo, Boso, Rosco, N'Goe . . . oniyá*) inciden en sus textos en el tema de la violencia racista que tanta alarma estaba despertando en los medios de comunicación. Las únicas excepciones en cuanto a la selección de los temas, desvinculados de la agenda mediática del momento, se hallan en *Sudaca* de Miguel Murillo y *Bazar* de David Planell.

Por otra parte, los autores y autoras dramáticos revelan una doble intencionalidad ética y estética a la hora de afrontar sus creaciones: no se trata solo de llevar a cabo una renovación de los lenguajes expresivos, sino también de realizar un teatro de denuncia social. Muchos autores manifiestan su deseo de inducir al público una reflexión que modifique o cuestione sus prejuicios xenófobos. A pesar de que algunos de ellos se muestran escépticos en cuanto al poder del teatro a la hora de promover un cambio de actitudes en el público, admiten haberse guiado por un compromiso político y social. Además, encaran el proceso creativo con la intención de llevar al público espectador o lector a la reflexión acerca de su propia identidad, con la finalidad de mostrar aquellos comportamientos xenófobos y racistas que, en ocasiones, pasan desapercibidos.

NOTAS

¹“La población extranjera se redujo en 138.556 personas (un 3,0 %) durante el primer semestre de 2014, hasta situarse en 4.538.503. Este descenso se debe al efecto combinado de la emigración y de la adquisición de nacionalidad española” (INE 1).

² Sirvan de ejemplo obras como *Víctor Bevch* (2002) de Ripoll en la que se problematizan las diversas actitudes de una comunidad de vecinos ante la llegada al edificio de un inmigrante de Bangladesh (García-Manso, "Teatro") y *Allegro (ma non troppo)* (2007) de Carmen Resino, que plantea escenas de la vida cotidiana de una empleada del hogar de origen latinoamericano (García-Manso, "Género").

³ La prensa y los medios de comunicación son una inagotable fuente de ideas para los autores y las autoras de teatro, que se ha visto potenciada en talleres de escritura dramática. Un ejemplo se halla en *La noticia del día*, un proyecto que reunió a catorce autores y autoras argentinos y españoles con el fin de escribir obras breves que versaran sobre una noticia publicada en el día de su nacimiento (Alvear).

⁴ Véase el capítulo que dedica Iglesias Santos a la representación del Otro en los medios de comunicación para una mayor profundización sobre este aspecto.

⁵ Sobre el contexto social de xenofobia y racismo que pudo favorecer la emergencia de las bandas neonazis en España y su concomitancia con otras bandas existentes en Europa, véase el estudio antropológico de Calvo Buezas, publicado en 1993 y acompañado de un abundante material hemerográfico que muestra que hacia esa fecha ya existía una conciencia social del problema, proyectada desde los medios de comunicación de masas.

⁶ Véase García-Manso para una profundización sobre este aspecto en relación con *Víctor Bevch* (2003) de Ripoll, e *Y los peces salieron a combatir contra los hombres* (2003) de Liddell ("Teatro"). Con un enfoque similar pero ampliando el espectro a más obras, véase el estudio monográfico de Doll.

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“Eu de noite sou seu cavalo”: Luisa Valenzuela’s Story of Interpretation and Inhabitation



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Abstract: In Luisa Valenzuela’s 1982 short story “De noche soy tu caballo,” the female narrator hears a fragment of a song lyric in Portuguese and interprets it to her male lover, a political dissident, as a reference to a ritual of spirit possession. This idea later helps her to stay strong and spiritually connected to him while she is interrogated and tortured. Critics have debated the nature of the relationship between these two characters in the context of Argentina’s most recent dictatorship, but they have neglected the Brazilian intertext, its cultural context, and the way its meaning is altered in translation. This current study reads Valenzuela’s story in dialogue with Chico Buarque’s song “Sem açúcar” in order to reveal the narrator’s interpretation as inaccurate, having more to do with her own needs and projections of Brazilian culture than with the meaning of the song. It also relates the narrator’s interest to social and political trends in late-1970s Brazil, including increased appreciation for Afro-Brazilian religions and for the role of women in Brazilian music.

Keywords: Argentina literature/literatura argentina, Brazil/Brasil, *Cambio de armas*, Chico Buarque, Luisa Valenzuela, popular music/música popular, translation/tradução

Like much of the work of Argentine writer Luisa Valenzuela, the short story “De noche soy tu caballo” functions on multiple levels, both personal and political, and lends itself to multiple interpretations. In the first section, the unnamed Spanish-speaking and presumably Argentine female narrator is briefly visited by a male political dissident who has been in hiding. The two of them make love while drinking Brazilian liquor and listening to Brazilian music, and the narrator interprets the song lyrics as a reference to a ritual of spirit possession. Later, in the custody of security forces, the narrator resists torture by convincing herself that the visit was only a dream. She calls on her absent, possibly deceased lover to “venir a habitarme cuando quieras” (109), like a spirit who comes to inhabit a medium. A mere five pages long, the story has received significant critical attention for its complex treatment of power dynamics between men and women and the dangers of love in a repressive regime. However, much less has been said about “De noche soy tu caballo” as a story of crosscultural contact and interpretation, and the source of the title phrase has not been examined.

In this current study, I read Valenzuela’s story in dialogue with the Brazilian song “Sem açúcar,” which is both more complex and more banal in its treatment of gender and possession than Valenzuela’s narrator appears to realize. Composed by Chico Buarque and famously recorded by Maria Bethânia in 1975, the song describes an unhappy personal relationship with uncomfortable similarities to that of the characters in Valenzuela’s story, but it comes out of an atmosphere of cultural ferment that strives for diversity and equality. Although it does not literally refer to religious ritual, the relationship between its male songwriter and its feminine voice parallels the inhabitation of a medium by a spirit, of a translator by an author, and of this narrator by her lover. The narrator’s mistranslation of the lyrics indicates a shallow and exoticizing attitude

toward Afro-Brazilian culture. However, through the same act of resignification, she validates the act of interpretation and creates for herself a condition of choice, allowing her to collaborate with her partner in the struggle for a better future.

Change of Weapons

"De noche soy tu caballo" is usually written about along with the other four stories in Valenzuela's collection *Cambio de armas*, a context that greatly informs the controversial relationship between its two main characters. Published in the United States in 1982, when the author was living in New York and speaking out against the military regime in her home country, *Cambio de armas* develops the themes of love, language, and power through five closely related narratives, all of which feature knowing, desiring female protagonists involved in some type of struggle with or against their male sexual partners. Valenzuela draws complex connections between these personal relationships and the broader political contexts of Argentina under dictatorship and exile in New York. The protagonists of "Cuarta versión," "La palabra asesino," "Ceremonias de rechazo," "De noche soy tu caballo," and "Cambio de armas" must all work through some process, lay hold of some weapon, in order to reclaim the independence and identity that have been denied to them as women.

The relationship between the unnamed female narrator of "De noche" and the man who visits her, referred to only by his codename Beto, has produced sharply divergent readings, more so than the romantic and sexual relationships in the other stories, which can more easily be labeled as negative and linked to the abusive relationship between an authoritarian government and its citizens. Nelly Martínez sets apart "De noche" as the only story in the collection to suggest "el logro de una relación de pareja verdaderamente liberadora y creativa" and sees the couple's lovemaking as "marcado por una auténtica entrega mutua" (160). In Ksenija Bilbija's reading, as well, the two characters are united by love, such that the only significant conflict within the story is "la imposición e interferencia de un gobierno represivo en su vida íntima" (46). On the other hand, María Inés Lagos-Pope sees the narrator's call for her lover to inhabit her at the end of the story as her willingness to become his "objeto poseído" (77). For Gwendolyn Díaz, this narrator is the least *concientizada* of the five women in the book, as is exemplified by the characters' sexual positions: "Beto asume la postura del amo; la monta y desde su posición superior la domina; ella lo acepta convirtiéndose en su esclava amante" (731).

I believe that these deep differences in interpretation stem in part from Beto's political stance: because he is fighting against a violent and repressive regime, fighting for a better world that the narrator also believes in, some readers are inclined, as she is, to forgive his faults. But in many ways Beto resembles the villains of *Cambio de armas*'s other stories, men who want to keep their women waiting at home, silenced, and denied knowledge of what the men do while they're away. The man who imprisons and brainwashes the female protagonist in the short story also titled "Cambio de armas" is gradually revealed to be a coronel and a torturer, and once she understands this and begins to recover her own identity she takes up a gun against him. But when Amanda in "Ceremonias de rechazo" makes the decision to reject her boyfriend, referred to only by the nickname El Coyote, she does so without having resolved whether he is "un delator," as her friends suspect (88), or working for "la buena causa," as he assures her (87); she has decided that his absence and refusal to communicate make his politics as a romantic partner unacceptable. Although Beto displays some of the same behaviors, the narrator of "De noche" does not choose to reject him.

However, it is a mistake to consider her to be a victim of false consciousness or completely submissive to her partner. When initially receiving Beto in her apartment she tells him about her recent conjectures as to where he has been; instead of explaining himself, he answers, "Callate, chiquita, ¿de qué te sirve saber en qué anduve? Ni siquiera te conviene" (106). The speech and

attitude resemble El Coyote's in "Ceremonias de rechazo": "Usted sabe que no soy dueño de mi tiempo, mamacita, de otra forma me pasaría la vida con usted. Bien sabe que las circunstancias me reclaman" (93). Both women react negatively, although Beto's "chiquita" obeys his order to keep quiet, only expressing her annoyance to the reader. Diane Marting, in a careful and nuanced reading of "De noche," relates the narrator's attitude here to the metaphor of women as horses that is also repeated in these three stories: "though dominated by Beto, she is rebellious against his domination" (703; see also Magnarelli 198–200 and Goldberg 300–302). Not simply his object or his slave, she recognizes his flaws but makes the choice to receive him into her home and her body, to love and support him through a dangerous and painful ordeal.

The narrator's act of interpretation in "De noche soy tu caballo" is like the gun in "Cambio de armas" and Amanda's series of rituals in "Ceremonias de rechazo": a tool that a woman uses to make herself powerful. There is an obvious difference in the aims, since this narrator uses her weapon in order to maintain her relationship with Beto rather than to end it or oppose him. But there are also important differences in the nature of the weapons, even between the related spiritual strategies used in "Ceremonias" and "De noche." In the former, Amanda makes up her own rituals based on broad notions of the meanings of dance, mirrors, baths, and flowers that are shared between many cultures. In contrast, the narrator of "De noche" is inspired by listening to a Brazilian song to describe a ritual that had long been practiced by enslaved Africans and their descendants in Brazil and that, in the 1970s and 1980s, was increasingly gaining devotion from non-African-descended Brazilians, as well as a small number of Argentines (Segato 348–50). Although this narrator is oppressed as a woman, somewhat mistreated by her lover, and later violently abused by her captors, the fact that she gains power by ignoring the literal meaning of the song and by appropriating the spiritual practice of a racial and cultural Other should give the reader pause.

Change of Meaning

The most striking display of this narrator's ability to reshape her experiences through interpretation comes at the end of the story, when she declares that Beto's visit was only a dream and that the physical evidence, his gifts of a Gal Costa record and a bottle of *cachaça*, do not exist (Valenzuela 109). But these Brazilian cultural artifacts have already undergone several shifts in meaning in the course of the story: the narrator first interprets them as clues that Beto has taken refuge in Brazil, then as objects that bring warmth and ease the lovers into caressing each other (106); the two characters then offer different explanations for the meaning of the song that Costa sings (107). We should be careful to read these ideas about Brazil and Brazilian objects as the purposeful constructions they are, not as simple descriptions. Although Valenzuela obscures the reality of Brazil as a country under military rule and the rich multiple meanings of Brazilian popular music, she does choose to use the name of a real singer who was active during the period, and she even quotes a recognizable fragment of a song lyric, giving readers the possibility to see just how much the narrator's translation and interpretation changes the lyric's meaning.

After the characters have drunk some *cachaça* and as they are beginning to make love, a loose phrase from the music attracts the narrator's attention and becomes the subject of conversation:

"A noite eu so teu cavallo" canta de golpe Gal Costa desde el tocadiscos.

—De noche soy tu caballo—traduzco despacito. Y como para envolverlo en magias y no dejarlo pensar en lo otro:

—Es un canto de santo, como en la macumba. Una persona en trance dice que es el caballo del espíritu que la posee, es su montura.

—Chiquita, vos siempre metiéndote en esoterismos y brujerías. Sabés muy bien que no se trata de espíritus, que si de noche sos mi caballo es porque yo te monto, así, así, y sólo de eso se trata. (Valenzuela 107)

Several critics have commented on this exchange (Bilbija 48; Sauter 101) and in particular on the divergence between the two characters' interpretations of the lyric: the narrator's concern with their spiritual connection versus the guerrilla fighter's insistence on the physical, which, as Goldberg notes, emphasizes the horse metaphor's "simbólico valor de dominación" (301; see also Marting 704; Magnarelli 197–99; and Morello-Frosch 693). But they have not traced the origin of the actual lyric, examined the narrator's attitude toward Brazil, or questioned her ability to understand and translate Portuguese accurately.¹

"A noite eu so teu cavallo" is an unmistakable reference to the line "Eu de noite sou seu cavalo" from the song "Sem açúcar," composed by Chico Buarque and sung by Maria Bethânia on the 1975 concert album *Chico Buarque and Maria Bethânia ao vivo*.² The narration "canta de golpe Gal Costa" changes the singer's name, removes that of the composer, and indeed removes this single line from the rest of the lyrics, as if it were not part of a song at all. And yet Valenzuela uses the name of a singer who frequently collaborated with both Buarque and Bethânia—and who, in the 1970s, occupied a similar place with Bethânia in the Brazilian and Argentine cultural imaginations—to provide a connection back to Brazil as a real place that readers should not ignore.

The fact that the line is not an exact match is revealing of the narrator's character and her relationship with Brazil. Before she even begins to translate, she indicates her limited knowledge of Portuguese by misspelling the words *sou* as *so* and *cavalo* as *cavallo*, but she speaks confidently, as if she were quite knowledgeable. A more significant difference from the original lyric is her replacement of the possessive *seu* with *teu*; while the former can be used in the second or third person perspective, the latter is unambiguously direct and intimate, part of a sentence spoken to a family member, close friend, or lover. The narrator's change makes the phrase fit her relationship with Beto as she speaks to him. *Seu cavalo* can plausibly be translated as 'your horse' if it is taken as an isolated phrase, which is precisely how the narrator has presented it here. In the rest of the song, however, the singer uses the third-person subject pronoun *ele* to describe her difficult relationship with a man who is either absent or sleeping, and a literal translation in Spanish would be 'de noche soy su caballo.'

These initial errors—or, perhaps, deliberate changes—hint that the narrator's further interpretation might not be trustworthy, and looking at the rest of the lyrics of "Sem açúcar," as well as other parts of Chico Buarque's oeuvre, makes this clear. A son of one of Brazil's most important intellectual families, Buarque is famous for elegant compositions that explore the perspectives of marginalized members of society, including outlaws, manual laborers, and women, but not specifically of Afro-Brazilians. Unlike several other prominent Brazilian songwriters in the 1970s, Buarque did not tend to use symbols of Afro-Brazilian history or religions, such as the names of resistance leaders or deities, in his lyrics.³ With this background, Valenzuela's narrator's assertion that the song or lyric is "un canto de santo," or ceremonial chant, makes little sense. Although the word 'cavalo' can indeed refer to a medium possessed by a spirit, that is not the subject of this song.

In fact, the female singing subject of "Sem açúcar" has a good deal in common with the narrator of "De noche soy tu caballo," not as a spiritual medium, but as a woman in love whose husband or boyfriend takes her for granted and, at times, puts her in danger. Each woman waits at home, not knowing where the man she loves might be, when he might return, or how he might treat her when he does. In Buarque's first verse, his narrator sings:

Todo dia ele faz diferente
 Não sei se ele volta da rua
 Não sei se me traz um presente
 Não sei se ele fica na sua
 Talvez ele chegue sentido
 Quem sabe me cobre de beijos
 Ou nem me desmancha o vestido
 Ou nem me adivinha os desejos.

The juxtaposition of passion, tenderness, indifference, and cruelty on the man's part, combined with phrases like "não sei," "talvez," and "quem sabe," communicates a profound feeling of uncertainty on the woman's part.

Buarque's use of repetition in parallel and contradictory phrases also resembles Valenzuela's narrator's earlier disordered speech upon greeting Beto, which breaks the conventions of punctuation and paragraphs:

Y pude decirle Hola casi sin sorpresa a pesar de todos esos meses sin saber nada de él, y
pude decirle
te hacía peleando en el norte
te hacía preso
te hacía en la clandestinidad
te hacía torturado y muerto
te hacía teorizando revolución en otro país. (106)

This is one of the first examples of Valenzuela's narrator's ability to create something with her imagination, but it also shows her isolation and exclusion from the realm of politics; because she does not know what to expect, she expects everything, and is barely surprised by his appearance. Like the man in the song, Beto brings her presents and kisses but fails to understand her true desires for communication and spiritual communion. His response to her imaginings, "Callate, chiquita" (106), and the narrator's acquiescence, are also mirrored in Buarque's second verse:

Longe dele eu tremo de amor
Na presença dele me calo
Eu de dia sou sua flor
Eu de noite sou seu cavalo.

The line about being someone's horse appears here as part of an exploration of the woman's impossible position: at times she is treated as a flower, a muse, a beautiful and precious object; at other times she is an animal to be used. Whether she is protected or dominated, she is never treated as a human being, worthy of respect and capable of expressing her own needs. Beto's insistence that the narrator can only be his horse at night in the sense that he mounts her in sexual intercourse thus appears much closer to Buarque's meaning than does the narrator's alternative interpretation.

Besides isolating the line from its earlier context, the mention of Costa singing "de golpe" may suggest that Valenzuela's narrator is hearing not the second verse but the very end of the song, where the last lines of each of the three verses are repeated between short musical interludes:

E nem me adivinha os desejos
Eu de noite sou seu cavalo
Eu rolo sozinha na esteira.

The meaning is still one of sadness, not of magic or ritual; but if the beginning of the song emphasized uncertainty, the ending communicates inevitability. Whereas the melody of the verses ranges all over the scale, expressing the woman's passion, these final three lines repeat the same simple rising and falling tune. In between the words, a flute repeats a phrase of just three descending tones. As José Américo Bezerra Saraiva points out, this flute part evokes the tune of an earlier Chico Buarque song, "Cotidiano" (recorded on the 1971 album *Construção*), in which a man sings of feeling trapped by the numbing routine of waking up and living every day with the same loving woman (166). The two songs complement each other by articulating male and female characters' dissatisfaction with their relationships. Through their lyrics and their repetitive structure, they both convey their characters' sense of resignation that their relationships

will go on as unhappily as they have until now (Saraiva 166–67). Similarly, Valenzuela's narrator shares her frustration with us as readers, but for the most part she does not attempt to change Beto's behavior.

Another point of commonality between "Sem açúcar" and "De noite" is that, assuming both works are set near the date of their publication, they take place under repressive military regimes. Valenzuela's narrator supposes that Beto was safer in Brazil than while visiting her at home (106), and indeed, by the late 1970s the Brazilian dictatorship had left behind the harshest phase of repression that lasted from 1968 to 1974; but the country was by no means a haven for leftists. The new period of *abertura* or *dilatação* allowed for some measure of political organizing and opposition, but revolutionary movements were still outlawed and their members were still targets of assassination and torture (Davila 137–50). In addition, the military governments of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Chile, Paraguay, and Bolivia (with support from the United States) all collaborated through Operation Condor to track, kidnap, and assassinate enemies of the state (Davila 99, 116). Thus, a revolutionary like Beto would not have been able to escape from repression simply by crossing borders. In addition to committing direct violence, the Brazilian military government restricted the movements and expression of ordinary citizens and of writers and artists, including Chico Buarque, who went into exile in Italy in 1969–70. Upon his return he was routinely questioned by security forces and required to submit his lyrics to officials in Brasília, who would decide whether or not he could record or perform the songs (Zappa 258–64). Valenzuela's narrator either does not understand or chooses not to consider these disheartening similarities between her situation and that of the character in the song, replacing Buarque's sympathetic portrayal of passive precarious waiting with a fantasy of mystical power.

"Como en la macumba"

The story of spirit possession that she creates is likely to appeal to her for multiple reasons, including an attraction to Afro-Brazilian culture, the respect accorded to women within Afro-Brazilian religions, and the association between Afro-Brazilian identity movements and Brazilian democratization in the 1970s and 1980s. Umbanda, Candomblé, and other smaller religious groups gained prominence and popularity in Brazil during the period of political opening that began in 1974, as citizens increasingly campaigned for the rights of workers, women, gays and lesbians, and black Brazilians (Davila 148–49; Dunn 180–81). There is immense variation among Afro-Brazilian religious communities, and Valenzuela's narrator's imprecise language makes it impossible to know what tradition she is referring to, but many religious groups do hold ceremonies where mediums go into a trance and are inhabited by deities or ancestor spirits, taking on their physical movements and transmitting their counsel. Women participate fully in these activities, as mediums and often as religious leaders. Afro-Brazilian religions also tend to be more accommodating to sexual minorities than Catholicism and other dominant forms of Christianity, in part because practitioners of any gender may be possessed by spirits or deities of any gender (Brown 122; Soler Cruz 95–96, 116–20). This phenomenon of gender crossing and its association with homosexuality has been a source of controversy within Afro-Brazilian religious communities and is a frequent motive of condemnation from outsiders, but it has also served as a refuge and inspiration for gay people and for others who believe in sexual freedom. In these later years of the Brazilian dictatorship, practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religions were able to contest the authoritarian discourse of Catholic morality and racial harmony (Davila 51; Dunn 43).

Even so, Valenzuela's narrator's language indicates that she has only superficial knowledge of these practices. Beto's chiding about "esoterismos y brujerías" is obviously disrespectful, dismissing the beliefs of oppressed peoples along with his girlfriend's interests; but her use of the word "macumba" and her intent to "envolverlo en magias" imply that she too is treating

spirit possession more as a curiosity than a religion (Valenzuela 107). “Macumba,” “magia,” and “brujo” are all parts of the derogatory language that mainstream Argentine press reports used in the 1980s to depict Afro-Brazilian religions as foreign and dangerous cults, according to anthropologist Alejandro Frigerio (“Nuevos movimientos” 72–76). Diana DeGroat Brown writes that “Macumba” is typically cited (along with Kardecism) as one of the forerunners of Umbanda but that “[a]lthough widely used, this term lacks any clearly established referent” (25). Kelly Hayes further explains that, within Brazil, the term has largely been used by outsiders to refer to spiritual practices of which they disapprove; this includes some Christians who reject all things non-Christian, but also some practitioners and scholars of Umbanda and Candomblé who seek to legitimize these more organized religions by contrasting them with the more syncretic practices of *macumba* or “black magic.” Outside of religious studies, cultural commentators going back to Oswald de Andrade in the 1940s have disparaged artists who create “macumba para turistas,” that is, works that seduce audiences by foregrounding the folkloric and the picturesque, emphasizing Brazilian difference from international norms at the expense of Brazilian reality (Andrade 42; Santiago 167). Critics writing about *Cambio de armas* have generally ignored this word or else repeated it without noting its pejorative connotations (Martínez 160, 181 n. 1; Marting 704, 707; Morello-Frosch 693), indicating, as with the initial translation, a tendency to take the narrator’s interpretation of Brazilian culture at face value rather than see it as an active appropriation and transformation of meaning.

Like Andrade’s tourists and the Argentines in a later study by Frigerio, Valenzuela’s narrator appears interested in Brazilian culture primarily for what sets it apart from Argentine culture, allowing her to imagine a form of escape. In interviews conducted in the 1990s, Brazilians living in and around Buenos Aires told Frigerio that Argentines were happy to receive them as friends, sexual partners, models, actors, and teachers, especially if they looked black or were knowledgeable about Afro-Brazilian culture (“Migrantes exóticos” 102–13). While immigrants from other neighboring countries were stigmatized and discriminated against (in part because of their indigenous features), Frigerio writes that Brazilians were exoticized; that is, they were still stereotyped, seen as different and less “advanced” than Argentines, but their difference was a source of attraction (99–100). George Reid Andrews observed a similar “fascination with things African and Afro-American” in Buenos Aires in 1976, despite Argentines’ reluctance to acknowledge African origins in their own people and culture (211).

The view of Brazilians as radically, fascinatingly different from Argentines is based in part on the very old idea that Argentina’s closeness to Europe, in ancestry and culture, makes it different from the rest of Latin America. As part of their project of building a “civilized nation” in the European mold, nineteenth-century Argentine elites favored European immigration, campaigns of extermination against indigenous groups, and military conscription and other policies that would diminish the Afro-Argentine population. Furthermore, historians such as Andrews and Oscar Chamosa have argued that official methods of keeping records and writing history have had the effect of reclassifying and assimilating many African- and indigenous-descended people into a supposedly homogeneous white nation, in contrast to other Latin American countries that defined themselves as products of racial mixing.⁴ “The national narrative,” writes sociologist Barbara Sutton, “posits that Argentines ‘descend from the boats’ that brought (white) Europeans,” erasing the history and continued presence of other groups (107). Valenzuela herself cites this same famous pun as a sign that Argentines lack a stable basis for national identity: “Se dice que los mexicanos descienden de los aztecas, los peruanos de los incas y los argentinos de los barcos, así que los argentinos necesitan construir su mito, armarse una identidad” (qtd. in Montaña Garfias 7; see also Kaminsky 29, 237 n. 4).

The woman in “De noche soy tu caballo” shapes her own identity through her interpretation of the song, indicating her desire for an alternative to the dominant discourse of Western Christian civilization favored by the military junta in Argentina. In this she resembles many Argentines who became practitioners of Afro-Brazilian religions during and after the last

dictatorship. Anthropologist Rita Laura Segato writes that her Argentine informants were looking beyond the borders of Argentina, “to Brazil, and through Brazil to Africa, to re-state a right to cultural and behavioral differentiation, to escape from totalitarian sameness” (345). The narrator’s interest follows the same instinct that seeks for a pluralistic society, and the path she takes is through religion and music.

Author and Interpreter

Although Valenzuela’s narrator’s interpretation ignores most of the lyrics of the song and the real problems that Brazilian people face, it is not without purpose or foundation. Even as escapism, it serves as a useful coping strategy, both for dealing with her taciturn lover and later in the desperate situation of detention and torture. Her identification with the medium who is inhabited reflects a willingness to value women’s creativity in performance, which is also an important trend in Brazilian music of the period. Inspired by the figure of the singer Gal Costa, the narrator links performance, translation, inhabitation, and love as collaborative and creative acts.

The narrator’s identification with Gal Costa has little to do with the lyrics of the song and more with their roles as women and as interpreters. It rejects the convention that sees the tasks of translation and performance—both often performed by women—as less creative or valuable than the work of an original author. Translation scholar Lori Chamberlain notes that similar gendered discourses have developed to disparage both translations and musical performances, which are seen as derivative, “artificial, false, and treasonous,” particularly if they do not, like a good wife, retain fidelity to the “natural, truthful, and lawful” work they are interpreting (315). In Spanish and Portuguese, we can also observe the coincidence of the word *intérprete* for both the person who transmits speech from one language to another and the one who performs in music or theater. The singer and the narrator in this story are both interpreters who rework the meaning of the song.

A further parallel between the two women is that both of them have remained in their home countries while their male counterparts have gone into exile. According to Christopher Dunn, Gal Costa became the most prominent voice of the Brazilian counterculture after Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil, her collaborators in the Tropicália movement, were arrested in 1968 and left the country in 1969 (150, 171). She did not compose songs, but she contributed greatly to the aesthetics and meaning of the counterculture through her selection of which songs to record, her vocal and performance style, her fashion choices and presence on the Rio beach scene, and in general the fact that she continued to record and perform in Brazil during the worst years of the repression. In this sense she was taking on great risk, as the narrator of “De noche” does by remaining in her home. Unlike many of Valenzuela’s female characters, this narrator does not attempt to step out of traditionally feminine spaces or roles in order to travel, to become a fighter or an author. What she does do—along with Costa and other stars of 1970s Brazilian popular music—is use interpretation itself to contest the low status assigned to feminine activities.

Returning to the question of the narrator’s inaccurate interpretation of the song lyric, it must be recognized that she is not interested in being faithful to the author’s intent. Indeed, from her perspective, she is not listening to a Chico Buarque song at all but simply to a line sung by Gal Costa. And considering Costa’s and Maria Bethânia’s career trajectories, it is reasonable to imagine that either of them *might* sing about an Afro-Brazilian religious ritual, especially in the late 1970s. In 1976, just a year after recording “Sem açúcar,” Maria Bethânia teamed up with her fellow *tropicalistas* Costa, Veloso, and Gil to release a double album and tour together as the group Doces Bárbaros. All four members of the group hail from Bahia, the Northeastern state most associated with Afro-Brazilian culture, and their project’s aims included making mainstream audiences more receptive to that culture, including Candomblé. Although none of them had

been raised practicing that religion, during this period they explored it in their personal lives and their songs (Dunn 175–76). Thus, although “Sem açúcar” as composed by Chico Buarque does not refer to spirit possession, it is understandable that the narrator would expect such a subject to appear in a Gal Costa song.

In addition to singing about Afro-Brazilian traditions, Costa and her colleagues were also using their creative work and public statements during this period to transform the gendered meanings of composition and performance, resulting in what critic César Braga-Pinto calls “transgendered voices”: when performing songs written from/for another gender’s point of view, singers may use gendered adjectives that would not normally apply, women profess love to women, and men sing of their desire to be loved by men (190–94). Lyrics take on new, sometimes provocative meanings when sung by different singers. At the same time, the act of taking on different roles allow the singers to present ambiguity in their own gender and sexuality without committing to a fixed category of identity. This phenomenon has a long history in Portuguese poetry and Brazilian music but increased after the 1960s (Braga-Pinto 89), coinciding with the greater openness toward feminism and sexual diversity in Brazilian culture.

Chico Buarque and the four Bahian musicians who made up Doces Bárbaros have all taken part in these kinds of playful transgressions, and while Braga-Pinto argues that Buarque’s image as a masculine heterosexual man is barely affected by his frequent performance of feminine-voiced songs (193), it is worth noting how Buarque’s attitude toward such songs changed over time. In 1967 it seemed self-evident to him that only a female singer could record his “Com açúcar, com afeto,” a song from the point of view of a long-suffering wife (Zappa 308), of which “Sem açúcar” can be seen as a more pessimistic rewriting (Saraiva 165–69). However, in the 1975 concert album with Maria Bethânia, her performance of the new song is immediately followed by Buarque singing the older one, demonstrating that he is now willing to sing the part of his own female character. In a 1981 interview Buarque would lament the “atitude machista” he had displayed in the sixties; writing and singing songs about women, he had since come to realize, made up an important and organic part of his work, much like writing about factory workers: “Eu não sou nenhum dos dois, mas na hora de criar me faço de mulher e de operário” (qtd. in Zappa 308). Note that it is not only the female singer who becomes a character here, but also the male songwriter. In 1982 Maria Bethânia said of working with Chico Buarque, “Chico escreve, compõe do modo que eu sinto . . . e cantar Chico é uma grande alegria para mim, me realiza como intérprete” (qtd. in Zappa 307), a statement that displaces the composer as the primary artist and positions him instead as a collaborator. Thus, even while maintaining the gendered division of labor, musicians like Buarque, Bethânia, and Costa treat both songwriters and singers as partners who create and are transformed by their work. By referencing “Sem açúcar” as a performance by Gal Costa, Valenzuela aligns her narrator with Brazilian musicians’ imaginative approach to gender roles as well as with broader cultural movements that celebrated African heritage and valued human rights.

Conclusion

It is possible to see the new identity-based social movements in Brazil and later in Argentina as a weak replacement for the revolutionary campaigns that had been destroyed by military repression, but in Valenzuela’s writing social and political change are complementary. Beto does not see the connection: he wants regime change without a change in the way he treats women, and at times he displays the same belittling and sexist behaviors as other men in *Cambio de armas* who side with the forces of repression. He also disdains the narrator’s interest in Afro-Brazilian religious ritual, as if it could not be related to transformation in the real world. But it is the idea of consensual possession, along with the notions of freedom, alterity, and equality that she associates with Brazilian music, that gives her strength to resist torture and support him in his struggle.

While some readers of “De noche soy tu caballo” are heartened by the sense of intimacy and solidarity between the two characters, others have been troubled by what they perceive as the narrator’s willingness to be subservient to her lover, as marked by her passive position when waiting for him, her willingness to be quiet when he tells her to, and her desire to be possessed and mounted, whether sexually or spiritually. Looking at the discourses around Brazilian popular music and Afro-Brazilian religions in the 1970s and 80s helps provide a different way of understanding the narrator’s actions and her power. Being inhabited or penetrated by another person does not have to mean becoming an object without a will of one’s own; it does not have to be diminishing or degrading. A *cavalo* accepting a spirit, a singer interpreting another artist’s composition, a communicator giving new meanings to another person’s words, or a lover welcoming a wanderer home are all engaging in activities that are often seen as unimportant and only suitable for a woman. This woman occupies or identifies with all those positions, and she does so as an active, creative participant in each relationship.

However, the fact remains that her translation is inaccurate and the interpretation she assigns ignores the actual content of the song lyrics. When the narrator jumps to interpret *cavalo* as medium, she is displaying her interest in the phenomenon of spirit possession but also relying on stereotypes of Brazilians as exotic Others whose problems could not resemble her own. Furthermore, she is appropriating the spiritual practices of some of the least powerful people in Brazilian society in the service of distracting her lover and getting him to think of sex instead of politics. When we take for granted that the narrator is explaining the true meaning of the lyrics, we are neglecting to recognize the power of her act of interpretation—both the positive power that strengthens her as an oppressed woman and the authority she claims over Afro-Brazilian culture.

The work we do as literary critics is also, of course, interpretation, an act of collaboration with other authors in the creation of meaning. And, like the narrator of this story, we are very often interpreting across languages and cultures; we engage in literal translation as well as the kind of explication that requires being acquainted with the greater story behind the words. In “De noche soy tu caballo,” I see both a source of inspiration and a cautionary tale for other interpreters of all kinds. We can follow this narrator’s lead in seeing interpretation as important work that has the possibility of bringing messages of hope and liberation into new contexts. At the same time, we must be more careful than she is, particularly in the presentation of subaltern cultural practices. Valenzuela’s narrator’s misunderstanding of Portuguese makes her inadequate as a translator and her appropriation of Afro-Brazilian ritual makes her irresponsible as a cultural mediator. We have the opportunity to learn from her example.

NOTES

¹ Magnarelli (197) and Sauter (101) reprint the narrator’s transcription without comment; Marting adds “sic,” presumably noting that it is not standard Portuguese (704); and Bilbija introduces further errors in the spelling (48). Magnarelli also writes that the title of the story comes from “a Brazilian song of the same name” (197).

² I am grateful to my colleague Marcus Brasileiro for helping me to identify this reference.

³ It is true that Buarque has frequently written, sung, and sung about samba, which can be considered an Afro-Brazilian art form since it originated among mostly black residents of poor Rio de Janeiro neighborhoods in the early twentieth century and carries significant African influence. However, during the 1930s and 40s samba was modified by musicians and songwriters of diverse backgrounds to widen its appeal among middle-class listeners, and it was promoted by the Vargas government as a symbol of racial harmony and national unity (McCann 41–95; Vianna 109–27). Since the 1970s it has again come to be associated more closely with Afro-Brazilian culture (Fernandes), but Buarque’s use of samba from the 1960s on is more easily read as an embrace of Brazilianness than of blackness.

⁴ Andrews’s history of *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires* includes the suggestion that nineteenth-century censuses deeply undercounted the Afro-Argentine population, in part by classifying some Afro-Argentines as *trigueño* (a term that does not necessarily denote African ancestry) rather than *moreno* or

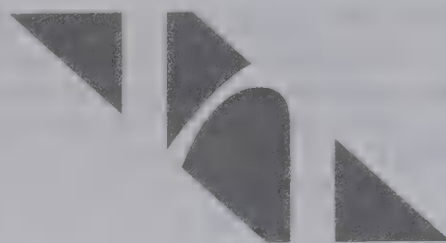
pardo. Chamosa contends that the Calchaquí people of northwestern Argentina went from being considered indigenous to white *criollos* in the early twentieth century as “the product of legal, linguistic, and economic changes as well as part of an effort to represent Argentina as a white country” (71–72). See also Kaminsky, especially chapter 6 on literary representations of Argentine racial identity.

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Os modernismos português e brasileiro no período heróico: Uma leitura convergente



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Resumo: Este artigo revisita o polémico período das vanguardas artísticas em Portugal e no Brasil nas primeiras décadas do século XX numa leitura convergente de textos de Fernando Pessoa e de Oswald de Andrade. Centrando-se nas afinidades históricas e políticas entre as duas nações, na partilha de ideários estéticos combinados com um interesse geracional em poéticas e ideologias internacionais, uma leitura convergente das duas vanguardas históricas identifica experiências partilhadas e uma ligação continuada através de símbolos culturais que, sintetizados política e poeticamente, perduram até os nossos dias.

Palavras-chave: avant-garde/vanguarda, modernism/modernismo, Fernando Pessoa, Oswald de Andrade

Este estudo revisita comparativamente momentos criativos das fases heróicas dos primeiros modernismos em Portugal e no Brasil, equacionando-os com produções de sínteses culturais nacionais que ganharam grande relevo no imaginário cultural das duas nações. Uma leitura convergente dos dois movimentos vanguardistas é aqui ensaiada enquanto proposta metodológica para o estudo cultural das primeiras décadas do século XX nos dois países. Por um lado, a leitura convergente pode facilitar uma contextualização mais aprofundada de processos de cristalização cultural que resultaram da dinâmica de divergências e confluências culturais internas e externas entre as duas nações. Por outro lado, a leitura convergente pode ajudar a destacar os momentos mais criativos em ambos processos de re-significação da nação brasileira e portuguesa e, por extensão, apontar para as idiossincrasias dos dois povos. Partindo do estudo comparativo de contextos socioculturais e de textos emblemáticos do poeta português Fernando Pessoa e do poeta brasileiro Oswald de Andrade inspirados no Futurismo, a heróica ou guerreira vertente europeizante das vanguardas históricas, este ensaio investiga efeitos literários e culturais que permanecem no pensamento português e brasileiro como problema, essência e mito.¹

No Brasil, os estudos sobre as atividades das vanguardas históricas são sumários quanto à natureza do diálogo existente entre a cultura brasileira e a cultura portuguesa a partir da segunda década do século XX. Em palavras do eminente crítico literário brasileiro Antônio Cândido, o modernismo, contrariamente ao romantismo brasileiro, “desconhece Portugal, pura e simplesmente” (134). Registra-se que foi com o modernismo paulista de 1922 que o Brasil se emancipou da ex-metrópole no plano simbólico, consolidando dessa forma a emancipação política de 1822. E sublinha-se que uma das vias mais notórias seguidas pelos jovens intelectuais brasileiros de 22 foi a contestação de modelos linguísticos e literários portugueses. Esses modelos garantiam uma permanência simbólica do passado que se equacionava com a continuidade de um imaginário cada vez mais longínquo das mentes das novas gerações, bem como a continuidade de modelos sociais e estruturas de poder associados a esse passado. Em Portugal, semelhante estudo da formação da consciência nacional e literária portuguesa secundarizava o estudo de autores brasileiros a partir da Independência do Brasil, apesar dos continuados laços de contacto entre

escritores das duas nações. Como assinala Arnaldo Saraiva, pioneiro dos estudos comparados dos dois modernismos, foi só em 1923 que o curso de Literatura Brasileira foi iniciado numa universidade portuguesa (“Os estudos” 8). Por seu lado, a separação da literatura portuguesa da brasileira no currículo académico do Brasil aconteceu em 1857 no Colégio D. Pedro II com o curso intitulado “História da literatura brasileira e nacional”, mas a autonomia curricular de Literatura Brasileira só se tornou realidade em 1946 na Universidade de São Paulo (Lajolo 2).

É importante verificar uma característica da fase heróica dos dois movimentos modernistas, português e brasileiro: coincidindo no ímpeto vanguardista despoletado por Filippo Tommaso Marinetti e pelo seu movimento internacional, o Futurismo, os elementos invocados para efetuar uma cisão simbólica entre as duas nações na realidade aproximam mais do que diferenciam as ações e o alcance das primeiras gerações modernistas de ambos os países. Observamos que as vanguardas das duas nações fizeram percursos paralelos motivados por contactos atentos entre si, e estiveram sujeitas a semelhantes condicionalismos internacionais que afetaram as duas culturas. Ambas expressaram um desejo de correção do presente através de uma solução mítica, ao articular aspetos reconhecidamente de uma estética de vanguarda (incluindo a atitude contra a tradição e contra a arte enquanto instituição), aliados a uma estética modernista que era sensível às estéticas romântica e simbolista.

Em ambos contextos nacionais, o termo “modernista” foi aplicado a uma nova geração de poetas e artistas plásticos que, no início do século XX (1915 em Portugal, 1922 no Brasil), manifestaram publicamente uma cisão com os modelos parnasianos e naturalistas-decadentistas vigentes. Frequentemente designamos por primeiro modernismo português a “fase heróica” (que inclui estéticas pós-simbolistas e estéticas vanguardistas) compreendida entre a publicação da revista *Orpheu* em 1915, e a derrocada da Primeira República por golpe de estado em 1926 (França, *(In)definições* 272). Igualmente, por primeiro modernismo designamos a geração brasileira que irrompe em 1922 como um coletivo no evento da Semana de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, mas que pelo menos desde 1917 tem manifestações individualizadas (Bosi, *História* 333), e se estende até a revolução de 1930.

Projetando-se como frentes guerreiras contra o passadismo, estas gerações refletem bem o seu tempo, pois politicamente vivem períodos de grande turbulência: em Portugal, a primeira geração modernista assiste à derrocada da Monarquia em 1910 e à Primeira Grande Guerra Mundial (na qual Portugal participa a partir de 1916), apoia e/ou contesta duas ditaduras, dois regicídios, e assiste a revoltas constantes (França, *Anos vinte* 74). No Brasil, a Primeira República iniciada em 1889, encontra-se enfraquecida perante as forças oligárquicas dos grandes centros metropolitanos (como São Paulo) que ganham proeminência económica, social e política. Em 1929, a grande depressão teve consequências graves para a economia brasileira, especialmente na escoação do seu principal produto de exportação, o café, e resultou em medidas centralizadoras do poder a partir dos anos 30 (Vianna 236–55). Quer no Brasil, quer em Portugal, os períodos de incipiente republicanismo foram seguidos de efetivas centralizações dos poderes estatais em regimes autoritários.

Já o segundo modernismo português, reunido em volta da revista *Presença* a partir de 1927, apresentou-se aparentemente desvinculado da prática de intervenção política. Mas essa foi igualmente a geração que deu a conhecer a um público mais vasto a anterior geração do *Orpheu*, publicando-a, e esse facto possibilitou uma existência como que em simultâneo—mas não uma confluência—das duas gerações a partir dos anos 30 (Saraiva e Lopes 1011–18).² No contexto brasileiro, o segundo modernismo conta com muitos dos participantes da primeira geração vanguardista e, a partir da revolução de 1930 que pôs fim à primeira república, eles encontram-se vinculados ao projeto de modernizar o Brasil. Esse projeto, acompanhando a modernização técnica, passou por uma descoberta do Brasil real, e para isso convergiram as forças políticas e intelectuais na construção de uma unidade política e cultural orgânica. Dos dois contextos resultaram ainda maiores centralizações de poder: em Portugal, António de Oliveira Salazar (transitando da ditadura nacional como ministro das finanças) decreta o

sistema de partido único, a união nacional, e proclama em 1933 o novo regime, Estado Novo. No Brasil, Getúlio Vargas transita em 1937 da revolução para a ditadura do homonimamente designado Estado Novo.

No que diz respeito a um eventual diálogo entre os dois movimentos vanguardistas e modernistas, convém ter presentes os laços pessoais e profissionais entre artistas e intelectuais dos dois países (Saraiva, *Modernismo* 82). O contacto regular entre o brasileiro Oswald de Andrade e o português António Ferro, o futuro ideólogo da célebre “política do espírito” do governo de Salazar e aquele que ativamente estabeleceu a ponte com o movimento modernista de São Paulo é incómoda hoje, mas merece revisitação. Ferro, cuja obra desvaneceu da memória literária portuguesa mas não da memória política, foi líder na propagação das ideias de raiz fascista-mussoliniana no Brasil e em Portugal (Saraiva, *Modernismo* 40; Torgal 60). Trata-se de um exemplo de confluência luso-brasileira de “ideias fora do lugar” (Schwarz, *Ao vencedor* 24).

Um suplemento da revista portuguesa *Contemporânea*, datado de Março de 1925, é um interessante testemunho dos pontos de contacto existentes entre ambas gerações modernistas, portuguesa e brasileira, nos seus respetivos contextos sócio-histórico-culturais.³ Refiro-me a um texto da autoria de Andrade: “Carta Aberta . . . a António Ferro sobre a arte e a literatura novas no Brasil”. Ao escrever de Paris, Oswald destaca as pintoras Tarsila do Amaral (“vanguarda independente”) e Annita Malfatti (“poesia *fauve*”), e suas ligações aos primeiros cubistas e ao pintor português Amadeo de Souza Cardoso (“inesquecível e imenso”). Para além das duas pintoras, e na sua costumada veia satírica, Oswald menciona “três ou quatro idiotas pensionados pelo governo” e, do *fogg* do Brasil, destaca a “voz estrídula, abelhuda, mexeriqueira do popular académico futurista Graça Aranha”. Oswald volta-se então para a polémica questão da língua, criticando a “prisão do falar brasileiro nos moldes lusitanos”, e compara a evolução do falar brasileiro à evolução do “inglês falado na América”. Por essa razão, Oswald enaltece em Portugal o “phenómeno Aquilino”, considerando o autor de *Terras do demo* juntamente com Amadeo de Souza Cardoso (e o próprio amigo Ferro) os maiores agentes da “renovação actualista” na arte portuguesa, e aqueles a quem o Brasil mais devia. Oswald valoriza em Aquilino Ribeiro o exemplar “trabalho sobre o material”, isto é, a língua, que para Aquilino Ribeiro encontrava-se pura na aldeia, e se opunha ao francesismo citadino. Curiosamente, trata-se do mesmo francesismo que era irónica marca linguística de atualização cultural quer em Portugal quer no Brasil.

No Brasil, a busca da autenticidade no povo, no seu falar e na sua cultura multifacetada, real “descida antropofágica” ao subconsciente cultural brasileiro (Barbieri 140), foi um projeto liderado e modelado por Mário de Andrade, cujos estudos etnográficos contribuíram simultaneamente para a valorização académica da cultura popular. Porém, é importante assinalar que a renovação linguística também fez parte da mudança de paradigma do modernismo europeu. A valorização da língua oral, do falar comum e a radicação da expressão poética na experiência da vida moderna motivaram a alteração da métrica convencional; numa relação interdependente, a atualização da linguagem poética acompanhou a libertação do verso (Steele 32–44).

Consequentemente, a carta do poeta brasileiro evidencia que os pontos de contacto entre artistas portugueses e brasileiros também transcenderam circunstâncias lusobrasileiras e estabeleceram-se diretamente em capitais culturais europeias, como foi o caso de Paris nessa época. Foi em Paris que confluíram as gramáticas modernistas e vanguardistas que artistas portugueses e brasileiros absorveram com tanta disponibilidade. Viveram em Paris poetas portugueses como José de Almada Negreiros, Mário de Sá-Carneiro, e o próprio poeta brasileiro Oswald de Andrade; pintoras brasileiras como Tarsila do Amaral, Anita Malfatti, e portuguesas como Amadeo de Souza-Cardoso e Santa Rita Pintor, todos eles participantes dos primeiros movimentos vanguardistas nos seus países.

Do mesmo modo que estes artistas confluíram na capital francesa, verificou-se que o centro também se deslocou à periferia num fenómeno por vezes de inversa antropofagia: um poeta como o suíço-francês Blaise Cendrars foi instrumental nos dois movimentos vanguardistas:

em 1917 participou no único número da revista *Portugal futurista* e em 1924 Cendrars viajou pela primeira vez com Oswald, Mário de Andrade e Tarsila do Amaral a Minas Gerais. Por sua vez, após o contacto com os poetas brasileiros e portugueses, Cendrars renovou a sua própria linguagem poética e cultural (Birelli).

Pouco tempo depois, nos anos 30, o antropólogo francês Claude Lévi-Strauss fez parte de uma missão científica francesa ao Brasil e realizou trabalho de campo etnográfico em Mato Grosso do Sul, vindo a publicar vinte anos mais tarde, em 1955, as observações dessas viagens na sua obra mais conhecida, *Tristes trópicos*. Se a tristeza dos trópicos, ou do sul global, se tornara tropo de uma visão eurocêntrica e imperialista estabelecida, foi no Brasil que se gerou uma contra-teoria assinaladamente modernista, a do feliz lusotropicalismo de Gilberto Freyre, definido como a capacidade portuguesa de adaptação e prosperidade nos trópicos, apresentada pelo antropólogo brasileiro em *Casa grande e senzala*, em 1933. Como demonstra a antropóloga portuguesa Cristiana Bastos, “há que ter presente a influência que o pensamento elaborado e expresso por Freyre teve na consolidação de uma ideologia que em muito se confunde com a própria auto-imagem de Portugal” (428) e que o Estado Novo de Salazar soube prontamente capitalizar em seu benefício. Situada dentro do espírito modernista, a teoria de Freyre pode ser lida como o contraponto feliz da visão eurocêntrica do triste subdesenvolvimento, hipercorrigida com traços de superioridade civilizacional.⁴

Os primeiros movimentos modernistas portugueses e brasileiros ilustram uma dicotomia, comum aos movimentos de vanguarda internacionais, entre destruição e consequente construção simbólica; desnudam modelos do imaginário cultural recebido por tradição que pretendem substituir por novos modelos, adequados ao novo século. Não foi por acaso que as primeiras vanguardas portuguesas e brasileiras se notabilizaram nas artes plásticas (o novo traço era uma linguagem nova) e na retórica (o manifesto, deslocado da esfera política, e tão comum nesses tempos, era oferecido como obra literária autónoma).

Oswald de Andrade e Álvaro de Campos (heterónimo de Fernando Pessoa) dois propulsores das correntes guerrilheiras das primeiras vanguardas brasileira e portuguesa, encontram-se nos projetos de uma poesia/pensamento de exportação, declarando a recusa da importação. Ambos participam da dinâmica de integração no centro da cultura europeia mas a sua contribuição produtiva é um pensamento e poética de resistência a esse mesmo centro. O nacionalismo provindo da sua situação de vanguarda periférica não é um nacionalismo homogéneo mas modal, como o definiu Haroldo de Campos, arauto brasileiro do Concretismo, neo-vanguardismo dos anos 1960: “Nacionalismo como movimento dialógico da diferença (e não como união platónica da origem e rasura acomodatória do mesmo): o des-carácter, ao invés do carácter; a ruptura, em lugar do traçado linear; a historiografia como gráfico sísmico da fragmentação eversiva, antes do que como homologação tautológica do homogéneo” (13). As vanguardas históricas ou primeiros movimentos modernistas brasileiros e portugueses vivem nessa e dessa contradição.

A vasta bibliografia de estudos sobre os movimentos de vanguarda da primeira metade do século XX demonstra que, na diversidade de programas estéticos e conjunturas políticas existente entre os múltiplos grupos e contextos nacionais, todos abarcam uma série de paradoxos que passam inevitavelmente pelo seguinte: as vanguardas foram movimentos artísticos em busca de um público e posicionando-se frontalmente contra o público. De acordo com Peter Bürger, dos múltiplos insucessos e falências dos movimentos de vanguarda herdamos uma evidência que é a impossibilidade de permanência de qualquer regime estético totalitário:

the farther-reaching intentions of the avant-garde movements can in fact be judged to have failed. . . . [I]t is precisely this failure that had certain consequences. The historical avant-garde movements were unable to destroy art as an institution; but they did destroy the possibility that a given school can present itself with the claim to universal validity. (87)

Enquanto arte do seu tempo, a arte de vanguarda recusava a associação *com* o seu tempo: apresentava-se contra a contemporaneidade (que associava com o passado), proclamava-se existir em frente dela, e no entanto, para muitos a arte de vanguarda constituiu um retrocesso.⁵ A disjunção entre artistas e público era ética, o ponto de vista daqueles era totalizante (pretendia agir sobre a sociedade em todas as suas vertentes) e iluminado (crítico, corretivo), produto de uma abertura cosmopolita. O gosto (do) público padecia de conceitos copistas (naturalistas), facto que era entendido como um prolongamento do modelo reprodutivo do *status quo* reinante na sociedade. O burguês era identificado como a figura por excelência de um modelo político-social arcaico; não porque o tivesse criado mas porque o reproduzia e o desejava: o capital garantia-lhe acesso a estruturas de poder que o indivíduo se empenhava em reproduzir. É sabido que muitos dos protagonistas das revoluções vanguardistas eram provenientes desta classe social que se congregava nos centros cosmopolitas como eram São Paulo e Lisboa; apenas os salvaguardava a vantagem do tal ponto de vista iluminado que abria as portas de projetos revisionistas. O poeta português José de Almada Negreiros proclamava em “A cena do ódio” datado de 1915 e incluído nas provas de *Orpheu* 3, mas só publicado parcialmente em 1923: “Hei-de, entretanto, gastar a garganta / a insultar-te, ó besta!” (48); e conclamava Mário de Andrade, “Eu insulto o burguês! O burguês-níquel” na sua “Ode ao burguês” de 1922 (88).

Álvaro de Campos publicou em 1917 no único número da revista *Portugal futurista* um virulento manifesto contra “os mandarins da Europa” intitulado “Ultimatum”. O “Ultimatum” de Álvaro de Campos lê-se como uma resposta-paródia, à primeira vista extemporânea, ao ultimatum de que tinha sido alvo Portugal em 1890 pela coroa britânica no contexto da partilha do continente africano por sete nações europeias, em 1882. O ultimatum inglês contribuiu ao descrédito público da monarquia portuguesa e acabou por precipitar no meio político português a mudança de regime. Decretando a “Fallencia de tudo por causa de todos! / Fallencia de todos por causa de tudo!” Álvaro de Campos anuncia: “Eu, ao menos, sou bastante para indicar o caminho! / Vou indicar o caminho!” (“Ultimatum” 32). O caminho anunciado por Campos passava pela proclamação de três leis universais: a primeira era a “lei de Malthus da Sensibilidade”, sendo a sensibilidade “a fonte de toda a criação civilizada”. A segunda, “A Necessidade da Adaptação Artificial” definida como um ato necessário de cirurgia sociológica. Para Campos, e aliás tal como para o ideólogo da geração de 1870, Antero de Quental, a “aquisição fixa” mais recente do psiquismo contemporâneo eram os dogmas do cristianismo, e por essa razão o poeta proclamava a terceira lei, “A intervenção cirúrgica [sic] anti-christã” (“Ultimatum” 32). Um outro ultimatum, do jovem poeta futurista Almada Negreiros, publicado igualmente no número único de *Portugal futurista*, prontamente apreendido pelas autoridades, realçava-se pela vertente, hoje incómoda, que aproximou o Futurismo do fascismo. No seu “Ultimatum futurista às gerações portuguesas do século XX”, lido por Almada a 14 de abril de 1917 no Teatro República em Lisboa, o poeta que tinha por objetivo demonstrar a intensidade da vida moderna a uma plateia insípida de lisboetas (“Ultimatum futurista” 35) defendeu a renovação da pátria portuguesa através da guerra, e terminou com a blague provocadora, “Coragem, portugueses, só vos faltam as qualidades” (38).

Enquanto fenómeno estético, o estatuto do “novo” apregoado nos manifestos e nas obras destes autores ganha um sentido de “regeneração”. Para Octavio Paz, modernidade e poesia moderna acontecem desde a Ilustração do século XVIII até a vanguarda do século XX, subordinadas a uma tradição de ruptura resultado de uma nova vivência do tempo segundo a qual o agora nega o ontem (333). Esta tradição do moderno é entendida não como a ciclicidade do mesmo (passado) mas a contraposição ao passado, a heterogeneidade, uma tradição sempre distinta. Daí que o paradoxo seja a figura por excelência da poesia moderna, já que a relação desta com a modernidade se baseia numa profunda ambiguidade: “adhesión entusiasta [a los movimientos revolucionarios de la modernidad] seguida por un brusco rompimiento”. As vanguardas que “viven de modernidad y mueren por ella” (333) situam-se no final desta vivência da tradição de ruptura; elas são, para Paz, a grande ruptura que encerra a modernidade.

Se Paz valoriza a modernidade nas suas manifestações iniciais, delegando às vanguardas o papel de ocaso da modernidade (a morte definitiva da tradição da ruptura), Theodor Adorno, em *Aesthetic Theory* declara, dentro da mesma lógica progressiva da história, a absoluta superioridade dos movimentos de vanguarda subordinados às exigências do novo, separando para isso “novo” de “novidade”. Para Adorno, as duas instâncias não escapam à evidência de se inserirem no modo de produção capitalista; as duas são mercadorias numa sociedade burguesa. No entanto, Adorno esforça-se por separar as águas do que seria o verdadeiro novo (o da produção artística) do falso novo, a novidade—valor de troca, destinada a seduzir o cliente (18–36). A aporia do novo destaca-se na dialética da arte moderna simultaneamente como consequência da dominação do “novo” no mercado, e como resistência às leis do mercado (82). Essa resistência é acima de tudo autocrítica à própria instituição da arte. Aqui reside o porquê da valorização das vanguardas na teoria estética de Adorno, retomada criticamente por Peter Bürger, para quem “with the historical avant-garde movements, the social subsystem that is art enters the stage of self-criticism” (22). Essa crítica acontece, pelo menos na primeira fase dos movimentos de vanguarda, em grande parte através de um discurso teórico, por meio de manifesto mais do que de “obra”. Devido a esse facto, entendemos frequentemente os períodos de vanguarda histórica como essencialmente produtores de ideias.

A intervenção no domínio social foi um dos aspetos que de imediato despoletou uma avaliação retrospectiva do trabalho intelectual das vanguardas. Os próprios artistas declararam de imediato também a falibilidade dos projetos e remeteram-nos ao arquivo histórico. Recorde-se a conhecida carta de Fernando Pessoa a Armando Côrtes-Rodrigues datada de dezanove de janeiro de 1915:

Passou de mim a ambição grosseira de brilhar por brilhar, e essa outra, grosseiríssima, e de um plebeísmo artisticamente insuportável, de querer *épater*. . . . Será talvez útil—penso—lançar essa corrente [Interseccionismo] como corrente, mas não com fins meramente artísticos, mas, pensando esse acto a fundo, como uma série de ideias que urge atirar para a publicidade para que possam agir sobre o psiquismo nacional, que precisa trabalhado e percorrido em todas as direcções por novas correntes de ideias e emoções que nos arranquem à nossa estagnação. (*Obras* 54)

Também Oswald de Andrade renegou, em 1933, às suas atividades no grupo modernista, declarando no célebre prefácio a *Serafim Ponte Grande*:

o movimento modernista, culminado no sarampão antropofágico, parecia indicar um fenómeno avançado. . . . A valorização do café foi uma operação imperialista. A poesia Pau-Brasil também. Isso tinha que ruir com as cornetas da crise. Como ruiu quase toda a literatura brasileira “de vanguarda”, provinciana e suspeita, quando não extremamente esgotada e reacionária. (131)

O desejo que o poeta brasileiro exprime de “ser pelo menos, casaca de ferro na Revolução Proletária” (Andrade, *Serafim* 133) enquadra-se bem no paradoxo geral de uma arte que deseja revolucionar todos os sistemas sociais e que é de imediato absorvida (enquanto arte e na sua vertente revolucionária) pela sociedade burguesa da qual ela mesma faz parte. Andrade proclama aquelas palavras—ao estilo de manifesto—no momento em que se junta ao Partido Comunista Brasileiro, isto é: a sua reação faz-se dentro do campo literário alargado e revela prioritariamente o seu carácter de discurso. Os vanguardistas são acertadamente apelidados por Charles Russell de “poetas, profetas e revolucionários” na medida em que partilham do fervor idealista romântico, mas com consciência das contradições da modernidade:

The avant-garde is true to its defining metaphor. It lives by its belief that it is in advance of aesthetic and social success. While modernists may search for a principle of transcendence or

autonomy within their contemporary context, avant-garde writers and artists seek strategies of utopic potentiality. (33)

Nos contextos português e brasileiro destacam-se de facto essas estratégias de potencialidade utópica, e os manifestos a seguir referidos aliam ao discurso do obituário o discurso da regeneração centrado em metáforas como a da Grande Humanidade em Álvaro de Campos, do Quinto Império em Pessoa, da poesia Pau-Brasil, da Antropofagia ou do Matriarcado de Pindorama em Andrade. Como explica Paul de Man, a retórica da decadência moderna e do revivalismo presentes nos manifestos vanguardistas projetam a base ideológica dos autores, servindo a arte de mediadora no processo de intervenção política: “It is just not that manifestos come to be written artfully but that a literary standard mediates a political one . . . the manifesto foregrounds ideology and then reframes it as art” (108). Pelo facto de corresponderem a um estilo ou mesmo a um género definido por futuristas e dadaístas, os manifestos “Ultimatum” (1917) de Álvaro de Campos e “Manifesto antropófago” (1928) de Oswald de Andrade obedecem aos postulados de Marinetti ou de Dadá com um grau de formalização estabelecido. Eles seguem a estrutura delineada no exemplo do “Manifesto dadá” de 1918 (Teles 108):

- 1) retórica do *não* e do *anti*, ataque e injúria: “Mandado de despejo aos mandarins da Europa. Fora! . . . Passae, esterco epileptoide sem grandezas, hysterialixo dos espectaculos, senilidade social” (Andrade, “Ultimatum” 30); “Contra as elites vegetais. . . Contra Goethe, a mãe dos Gracos, e a Corte de D. João VI” (Andrade, “Manifesto” 18).
- 2) frase curta, incisiva, aforística: “A Europa está farta de não existir ainda!” (Andrade, “Ultimatum” 32). “Só não há determinismo onde há mistério” (Andrade, “Manifesto” 16).
- 3) proposta: “Queremos a Revolução Caraíba” (14). “A transformação permanente do Tabu em totem” (Andrade, “Manifesto” 15).⁶ “Eu, ao menos, sou bastante para indicar o caminho! Vou indicar o caminho!” (Andrade, “Ultimatum” 32).

A relação do manifesto à obra entende-se como a realização performativa do projeto de intervenção da vanguarda. Os poemários *Mensagem* e *Pau-Brasil* realizam essa intervenção delineada nos manifestos acima referidos: partindo de premissas semelhantes, recorrem a estratégias idênticas para a rearticulação da Nação dentro do projeto modernista. As duas obras procedem ao revisionismo histórico centrado na recuperação das origens e a uma projeção mítica no futuro, redentora do momento presente. Em Andrade, a antropofagia enquanto recurso poético resulta na apropriação paródica dos textos fundadores da história brasileira no período colonial. Em Pessoa, como desenvolverei abaixo, a proclamação do advento messiânico da Grande Humanidade resulta num texto profundamente irónico de regresso aos patriarcas históricos e míticos dos inícios da nação e da era das navegações.⁷

Na comemoração do primeiro centenário da independência do Brasil, os modernistas de 1922 proclamaram a (sua) nova arte como expressão da descoberta intelectual do Brasil. Declarando a falência dos laços parnasiano-simbolistas à “terra-mãe”, decretaram a libertação linguística na “contribuição milionária de todos os erros” (Andrade, “Manifesto da poesia Pau-Brasil” 6) bem como a libertação formal do verso. Na heterogeneidade que foi o movimento modernista de 1922, Oswald de Andrade representa a tendência guerrilheira e nativista que identificamos também em movimentos como o *Verdeamarelismo* ou o *Grupo da anta*. Estes movimentos, contrários à ideologia do autor que, em 1933, se juntou ao Partido Comunista, favoreceram um “nacionalismo clânico, de direita” (Bosi, *Céu* 119). Benedito Nunes sugere que a antropofagia de Andrade é também uma paródia das teses da *metafísica bárbara* de Graça Aranha, segundo as quais a síntese brasileira devia ser feita em direção da herança latina, que devia sobrepor-se ao “fetichismo do negro” e ao “temor religioso do índio” (xxxii). A filosofia

dialética permite ao autor do “Manifesto antropófago” conciliar dois “hemisférios culturais” opostos: o Matriarcado, que produziu uma cultura antropófaga, e o Patriarcado, que produziu uma cultura messiânica, resolvem-se na síntese brasileira do “homem natural tecnizado” (“A crise da filosofia messiânica” 1972: 79).

Simultaneamente, os manifestos “Poesia Pau-Brasil” e “Manifesto antropófago” aproximam-se de projetos como o “Manifeste canibale dada” de Francis Picabia de 1920, ou de “Anthropofagie” de Alfred Jarry de 1902 (Helena 112), enquanto declaram o regresso às origens brasileiras: Pau-Brasil, primeira matéria-prima de exportação do Novo Mundo; e antropofagia, ritual de deglutição e incorporação do inimigo. O célebre aforismo do “Manifesto antropófago”, “Tupi, or not tupi that is the question”, parodia a hegemonia ocidental sobre o Novo Mundo, que é em Oswald colocada na base do dilema dos escritores latinoamericanos (Schwarz, “Nacional”). Para o concretista Haroldo de Campos, revisitando os antropófagos de 1922, a quem apelida de “bárbaros alexandrinos” (21) devorando todas as outras civilizações, “o ‘pesadelo da História’ . . . tem sido um barroco e obsessivo pesadelo de escritura” (22). No poemário *Pau-Brasil*, Andrade faz a desmitologização paródica dos relatos do “descobrimento” do Novo Mundo, os roteiros que figuram na história dos inícios do Brasil que são na realidade a narrativa histórica desde o ponto de vista da herança portuguesa. No seu poemário de 1927, *Primeiro caderno do aluno de poesia Oswald de Andrade*, a poética ingénua (ou naïve) assume a função de agente de contra-cultura, como é exemplo “História pátria”, uma cáustica balada infantil: “Lá vai uma barquinha carregada de Aventureiros. . . Lá vem uma barquinha cheinha de índios / Outra de degredados / Outra de pau-de-tinta” (164). Já Almada Negreiros, acentuando a derrisão paródica, publicou, em 1922, uma *Histoire du Portugal par coeur*, escrita em Paris para ensinar “aos estrangeiros a Raça onde [nasceu]”. São poemas escritos de memória, de cor, e proferidos como que à toa: “Nous avons notre Soleil National Portugais / qui fait grandir les pastèques et qui rend les / femmes belles comme des pommes et les hom- / mes mârs comme des mâts” (102).

Bastante mais complexo no contexto português é o caso do poemário *Mensagem* de Fernando Pessoa. Publicado em 1934, tendo os poemas sido escritos entre 1913 e 1934, mas de qualquer forma já bastante longe das aventuras vanguardistas de 1915, este poemário é a obra que gerou maior polémica nas gerações posteriores, senão mesmo na sua. Eu proponho que esta é também a obra que melhor realiza o projeto de intervenção delineado no “Ultimatum” do heterónimo de Pessoa, Álvaro de Campos. A blague da estética do choque encontra-se, em *Mensagem*, transfigurada no paradoxo linguístico e de pensamento: “Baste a quem basta o que lhe basta / o bastante de lhe bastar!” (em “O das quinas”) (Pessoa, *Mensagem* 16). A forma estrófica escolhida para os poemas, o soneto, provoca estranhamento: sugere um passadismo deliberado mas não contradiz as conquistas do verso livre (o metro é irregular). A contenção formal impede a emoção fácil e exige um esforço de interpretação. O tom grave e sentencioso: “Deus quer, o homem sonha, a obra nasce” (em “O infante”) (Pessoa, *Mensagem* 51) une-se quer à natureza histórica e local do tema, quer à dimensão mítica e universal. Pessoa interessa-se claramente n’*Os lusíadas* pelo Luis de Camões do discurso contrapontístico que ganha expressão na voz do Velho do Restelo (Canto IV) e nos comentários moralizantes nos finais de Canto (I, VI, VIII). Pessoa recupera esse Camões épico pessoal, incómodo a um Estado Novo empenhado na reescrita gloriosa da saga portuguesa. A hora de Portugal, “Ó Portugal, hoje és nevoeiro . . . / É a Hora!” (em “O nevoeiro”) (*Mensagem*, Pessoa 96) é tragicamente anacrónica no poema de Pessoa e já o era no poema de Camões.

O messianismo de *Mensagem* é clarividente apenas numa leitura superficial, e as várias interpretações, decodificações e apreensões do texto que se foram fazendo desde a sua publicação, em geral, pecam por redutoras. Como notou Eduardo Lourenço no seu prefácio a *Mensagem* (na edição de José Carlos Seabra) e sublinhou Maria Irene Sousa Santos no seu importante estudo, *Atlantic Poets*, o messianismo de *Mensagem* não é estranho a um leitor inserido na cultura anglo-americana (na qual se formou Pessoa), ele está já presente em Whitmann, Hart

Crane, Eliot, Pound. Por outro lado, como demonstra Onésimo Almeida, a ideia do mito como construção racional com a finalidade pragmática de alcançar a regeneração coletiva é cuidadosamente elaborada por Pessoa mediante leituras várias:

Influenciado por Carlyle, [Pessoa] terá vindo a conceber uma sociedade em que uma aristocracia de heróis, entre os quais o poeta é o maior, desempenha um papel motor no processo evolutivo dum povo. . . . Conhecedor da filosofia de Bergson, tem-na como pano de fundo. . . . Provavelmente conhecedor do mito da greve geral proposto por Sorel como solução para se sair da inactividade decadentista, Pessoa ter-se-á servido do modelo adaptando a ideia à situação portuguesa, mas seguindo-o de perto: o mito deve ter raízes populares (daí o ter ido buscar o Sebastianismo . . .); deve apontar para um futuro iminente. . . ; o mito deve ser descrito em termos vagos, misteriosos, de modo a exercer apelo sobre as pessoas. . . . Daí a recuperação do Quinto Império, também uma ideia bastante “nacional”, transformando-o num império espiritual para parecer possível e simultaneamente ser inatingível. (100–01)

A impossibilidade de uma interpretação única deste poemário de Pessoa encontra-se já inscrita na história da receção de *Mensagem*, controversa e heterogénea desde a sua publicação em 1934 para o concurso do prémio nacional(ista) de poesia promovido pelo Estado Novo no apogeu da ditadura de Salazar. O prémio de segunda categoria que lhe foi atribuído confirma a perplexidade dos primeiros leitores, como António Ferro, diretor do Secretariado de Propaganda Nacional, ávidos de fazer de *Mensagem* a “Bíblia do nacionalismo poético, apesar do seu misticismo obscuro” (Lourenço, “Sonho” xx), e o desconforto de não saber ao certo o que fazer com a falta de referencialidade concreta dos poemas. A inconstância na receção de *Mensagem* até aos nossos dias terá de ser entendida como fazendo intrinsecamente parte da impossibilidade de fixação de um sentido único ou de resolução dialética.⁸ Aliás o próprio Pessoa deixou testemunho da receção de *Mensagem* em 1935, ano da sua morte: “muitos . . . me confessaram não compreender como, depois de escrever *Mensagem*, livro de versos nacionalista, eu tinha vindo para o *Diário de Lisboa* defender a Maçonaria” (*Obras* 71). Pessoa define-se ideologicamente como “individualista fraternário” explicando que “Há três realidades sociais—o indivíduo, a Nação, a Humanidade. Tudo mais é fictício. São ficções a Família, a Religião, a Classe. É ficção o Estado. É ficção a Civilização” (70). Procurando esclarecer estes princípios sem necessariamente destrinçar *Mensagem* de Maçonaria, o poeta afirma que “o Indivíduo e a Humanidade são *lugares*, a Nação o *caminho* entre eles” (71). Na defesa de um patriotismo fraternal, visando a humanidade para além das fronteiras geográficas, Pessoa sublinha o poder de ação e sublimação do indivíduo enquanto iniciado, num conceito de existência humana como aprendizagem: “A Nação é a escola presente para a super-Nação futura. Cumpre, porém, não esquecer que estamos ainda, e durante séculos estaremos, na escola e só na escola” (70).

O estudo dos efeitos das vanguardas em Portugal e no Brasil conflui na projeção de imagens nacionais enquanto o mais recente projeto cultural nos dois países com pontos de contacto significativos. O processo de “colonizar verbalmente o Novo Mundo” característico do modernismo latino-americano (Yurkievich 1073; tradução minha), ou a utopia mística da nação portuguesa transposta na metáfora imperial do Quinto Império, acompanharam teorias de unidade nacional e homogeneidade cultural (nas variantes de heterogeneidade sintética no Brasil e homogeneidade plural em Portugal) que foram apropriadas pelo Estado intervindo diretamente na síntese real do “efeito discursivo de nação” (Larsen 74). Identificamos sínteses levadas a cabo durante o século XX em Portugal e no Brasil quando os dois Estados Novos se encarregaram da fixação da essência cultural e intelectual da nação, com efeitos assinaláveis na educação, no folclore, no desporto, no cinema e na arquitetura (Johnson 10; Torgal 121). Os monumentos que mais enfaticamente operam a síntese institucional e convergente dos dois Estados Novos são as duas estátuas do Cristo Redentor, estendendo o abraço transatlântico uma à outra; a primeira foi construída no Rio de Janeiro (idealizada em 1921) e a segunda em Lisboa.⁹ As duas estátuas

simultaneamente abençoavam o poder estatal enquanto simbolicamente perpetuavam os laços entre as duas nações.

Mas será sempre o estado a operar sínteses culturais? Certamente que não; no entanto, a sua institucionalização é um efeito cujos processos de formação, narrativização e cristalização nos interessa desvelar. Neste estudo procurei apresentar as realizações poéticas de Fernando Pessoa e Oswald de Andrade identificadas com as vanguardas artísticas do início do século XX como um trabalho da periferia aspirando a ser centro: o mito do Quinto Império visava re-ligar culturalmente uma nação estagnada à Europa; a antropofagia, deglutindo o ocidente, pretendia uma aproximação ao progresso da civilização ocidental de forma não subserviente. Os dois autores apresentam cenários civilizacionais que, sendo simultaneamente propostas estéticas, ironicamente resistiram às sínteses institucionais estadonovistas e perduram no pensamento cultural brasileiro e português contemporâneos. O trabalho das vanguardas portuguesa e brasileira converge em processos e efeitos comuns de descentralização e recentralização simbólica. Tratando-se ambos de respostas criativas a condicionalismos político-económicos de dependência colonial centenária (Santos, “Between” 11; Schwarz, “Nacional”), o entre-lugar da cultura latino-americana enquanto síntese derivada da antropofagia cultural (Santiago 30) tem paralelos produtivos com a inter-identidade (Santos, “Between” 24) e a hiperidentidade mítica portuguesa enquanto produto de uma negação identitária (Lourenço, *Nós* 22).

Para além de todas as sínteses institucionais, as vanguardas históricas dos inícios do século XX perduram no psiquismo nacional brasileiro e português. No carácter internacionalista de uma arte cosmopolita perdura o sonho de pertença e de cooperação inter, trans e a-nacional. Na figura do artista produtor e produto de um mercado global da cultura, perdura a figura do visionário, oscilando muitas vezes entre o pedagogo e o demagogo. E ainda, perduram certos textos. A autoprescrição efetuada pela vanguarda artística visava projetar um eterno presente enquanto realidade construída pelo ser contemporâneo, que assim mantinha abertas as condições de possibilidade da existência quer de um novo regime para a arte, quer de uma sociedade renovada. Nesses textos e nesses projetos de vanguarda, na concreta extraterritorialidade do não-lugar, que é o mito, persiste a consciência crítica da sociedade, potencialmente renovada e atualizada na nossa leitura atenta.

NOTAS

¹ As seguintes edições dos textos das vanguardas históricas portuguesa e brasileira são a referência neste estudo: *Vanguarda europeia* do crítico brasileiro Mendonça Teles (a sexta edição de 1982 inclui alguns textos da Vanguarda portuguesa). *Modernismo brasileiro* do crítico português Saraiva (edição aumentada de 2004).

² As revistas literárias ou culturais das vanguardas históricas como *Orpheu*, *Klaxon*, *Presença*, entre outras, são elementos intrínsecos de estudo deste período na medida em que, sendo espaços paralelos àqueles criados pela imprensa diária, davam expressão a zonas de risco, espaços de “[i]nestabilidade y apertura, zona de riesgo y territorio resbaladizo” (Rocca, “Por Qué” 6).

³ *Contemporânea* publicou-se entre 1922 e 1926. Edição facsimile em *Pacheko, almada e contemporânea*.

⁴ O ensaísta brasileiro Santiago explica bem esta dinâmica no conhecido ensaio, “O entre-lugar do discurso latino-americano”. Em leitura convergente encontra-se o conceito de “inter-identidade” do sociólogo português Boaventura de Sousa Santos em “Between Prospero and Caliban”.

⁵ Aquilo que para Bürguer foi positivo (o fim da hegemonia de uma teoria de arte), para o historiador marxista Hobsbawm foi negativo e trouxe consequências nocivas para o século XX na transição da “Idade do império” para a “Idade dos extremos”. Hobsbawm insurge-se contra a dissolução do sentido trazida pelo abstracionismo vanguardista.

⁶ Ao contrário de Andrade, Pessoa interessou-se mais pelo Freud de *Psicopatologia da vida quotidiana* do que pelo Freud de *Totem e tabu*. De acordo com Perrone-Moisés, o único livro de Freud anotado por Pessoa existente na sua biblioteca é *Un souvenir d'enfance de Leonard de Vinci*. Em “Pessoa e Freud” uma interessante leitura em paralelo da obra de Freud com o *Livro do desassossego*, Leyla Perrone-Moisés sugere que Pessoa tinha um maior entendimento do fenómeno da sublimação artística do que o pai da Psicanálise.

⁷No breve ensaio “Identidade e Memória”, Lourenço efetua uma confluência entre o projeto de Fernando Pessoa e a construção da memória nacional portuguesa de pendor universalista associando o fenómeno da despersonalização à consequente vocação de não-identidade pessoana e portuguesa (Nós 14). E paradoxalmente, em “Portugal—Identidade e Imagem”, Lourenço associa a imagem nacional eufórica de Portugal como um país sem problemas de identidade ao fenómeno de excesso ou hiperidentidade, real ainda quando Portugal deixou de ser império (Nós 22).

⁸No pós-25 de Abril pós-colonial este livro de Pessoa foi destinado a um (in)cómodo silêncio, acompanhando de perto o lento desprestígio d’*Os lusíadas*. Para uma detalhada análise da receção de Mensagem leia-se “Mensagem. Uma tentativa de interpretação” de Onésimo Almeida (2014: 39–131).

⁹Pode ler-se no sítio oficial da estátua portuguesa, *Cristo Rei*, que o influente cardeal português do Estado Novo, D. Manuel Cerejeira, sentiu-se inspirado pela estátua brasileira aquando da sua visita oficial ao Brasil, em 1934. Leia-se ainda a este respeito o interessante estudo de Heloísa Paulo, “*Aqui também É Portugal*”, sobre a comunidade portuguesa emigrante no Rio de Janeiro, a “colónia portuguesa”, e o seu papel decisivo na manutenção de laços estreitos entre os governos de Oliveira Salazar e Getúlio Vargas; um desses laços efetivou-se pela contribuição monetária da “colónia” para a construção da estátua do Cristo Rei em Almada (480–82).

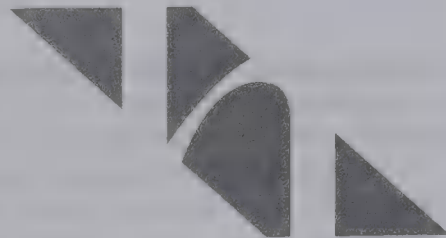
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REVIEWS

Prepared by Domnita Dumitrescu



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Pan-Hispanic/Luso-Brazilian Literary and Cultural Studies

Alarcón Sierra, Rafael. *Vértice de llama: El Greco en la literatura hispánica. Estudio y antología poética*. Valladolid: U de Valladolid, 2014. Pp. 316. ISBN 978-8-48448-816-3.

La publicación de *Vértice de llama: El Greco en la literatura hispánica. Estudio y antología poética* es una buena noticia para todos los amantes del Greco y la literatura. En este libro, Rafael Alarcón Sierra presenta a Doménikos Theotokópoulos (1541–1614), más conocido por el Greco, como un autor contemporáneo sin el cual no podría entenderse la sensibilidad moderna en la literatura hispánica. Con el fin de presentar la relevancia actual del pintor cretense, el autor ha recogido en este libro todas las referencias que se han hecho desde el punto de vista literario a su obra pictórica, completando dichas referencias con una amplia antología poética. De esta manera, se hace un recorrido cronológico en el que tanto se muestra la influencia que su pintura ha ejercido en la poesía como se destacan las características de su obra que han contribuido a que sea considerado un precursor de la sensibilidad moderna.

La obra, por estar dividida en tres partes de naturaleza muy diferente, es polimórfica. La primera parte del libro es un ensayo teórico titulado “La *construcción* del Greco en la modernidad”. En esta sección, Alarcón Sierra argumenta el cambio de valoración que ha sufrido el Greco a lo largo del tiempo hasta llegar a constituirse en un precursor del arte moderno. Según el crítico, en un primer momento, el más cercano a la vida del pintor, las valoraciones más extendidas entre los escritores fueron en muchas ocasiones la indiferencia e incluso el desprecio. Sin embargo, a partir de la revalorización de España que hicieron los viajeros extranjeros del siglo XIX, “las ideas románticas transformaron esta supuesta extravagancia en la originalidad, la libertad y la locura del genio” (12). A partir de aquí, la consagración es absoluta, tanto dentro como fuera de España. De entre todos los autores citados en el estudio, Alarcón Sierra destaca a los modernistas, fundamentalmente Pío Baroja y Azorín, quienes terminarán de consagrar al Greco al percibir en su obra los motivos estéticos y espirituales que en su opinión caracterizan a España.

La segunda y la tercera sección del libro son las más cercanas entre sí, ya que ambas se centran estrictamente en la poesía. En la segunda, “El Greco en la poesía hispánica”, la consideración de base es el estudio de aquellos poemas hispánicos que han hecho referencia directa a la obra del pintor cretense. El autor atiende de forma cronológica a aspectos concretos como

la aparición en los poemas de un cuadro determinado o la utilización de la ékfrasis a la hora de su composición. Incluso, en muchas ocasiones el recorrido se detiene para hacer un análisis minucioso en el que se detalla la íntima interconexión entre la obra literaria y su fuente pictórica. La tercera, y última parte, es una antología de poemas hispánicos, principalmente de los siglos XX y XXI, que se han dedicado al pintor o que se inspiran en su obra. En esta última sección es la poesía la que toma un dominio absoluto, por lo que las páginas adquieren la forma de una antología poética al uso en la que solo se da noticia del autor del poema y de su lugar de publicación. No obstante, muchos de los poemas de la antología han sido referidos en la sección segunda, por lo que la antología traza una continuidad natural con el resto del libro.

El valor de este estudio-antología radica, sobre todo, en la riqueza informativa y acopio de materiales del que hace gala. Todas las partes están acompañadas de un extenso aparato de notas, algunas de ellas eruditas, donde se informa de la publicación de todos los textos periodísticos, ensayísticos y literarios de los que se da noticia. Asimismo, la obra se cierra con una amplia bibliografía que complementa el aparato crítico. Aunque el texto no incluye ninguna imagen de los cuadros del Greco a los que hace referencia, no se echan en falta esas imágenes que, por lo demás, son fácilmente localizables. Es por esto que *Vértice de llama* es un libro que está más dirigido al campo de los estudios literarios que al de los visuales, dado que su contenido se centra en la recepción literaria y producción poética inspiradas por la pintura del Greco. En este sentido, tanto estudiantes graduados como investigadores especializados pueden beneficiarse de su contenido dada la amplitud de su enfoque. Con todo, teniendo en cuenta que la tercera sección es una antología poética, el valor del libro se abre también a cualquier lector interesado en la poesía hispánica. Por lo dicho hasta ahora, y por ser la primera vez que se reúnen en un solo volumen todas las referencias literarias al Greco, *Vértice de llama* es un libro de consulta y lectura valioso para el campo de los estudios literarios.

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Bezhanova, Olga. *Growing up in an Inhospitable World: Female Bildungsroman in Spain.* Tempe: Asociación Internacional de Literatura y Cultura Femenina Hispánica, 2014. Pp. 228. ISBN 978-0-97944-803-4.

Olga Bezhanova's *Growing up in an Inhospitable World: Female Bildungsroman in Spain* serves as a necessary addition to the limited body of research on the genre. This thorough study makes significant contributions to a broader range of scholarly topics including genre theory, the impact of social and political contexts on canonization, the relationship between the subject and history, narrative theory, and gender and sexuality in modern Spain.

Originating in Germany and focusing on a male protagonist's coming of age in modernizing society, the genre of the Bildungsroman is inextricably linked to notions and experiences of gender and modernity, as well as to specific national literatures. As Bezhanova notes, the female novel of formation has been subject to a double erasure due to both the marginalization of Spain within Europe and to the marginalization of women in Spanish society. She succinctly outlines the history and historicization of the Bildungsroman and argues for a broadening of the genre beyond conventional national, historical, and gender boundaries.

Bezhanova's study begins with a reevaluation of nineteenth century novels by Fernán Caballero, Pilar Sinués de Marco, and Concha Espina, traditionally viewed as antifeminist. Her analysis demonstrates that "far from being propaganda pieces aimed at keeping women in subjection, these novels discuss the obstacles that society places on the way to female development and offer ways of overcoming these obstacles" (54). By beginning with the text itself and moving outward towards the author and society, she is able to examine fruitfully a range of possible relationships among sociohistorical context, character building, narrative technique, genre, and gender.

Chapter 2 focuses on the emergence of a key moment in Spanish literature characterized by the female Bildungsroman during the backlash of female oppression orchestrated by Franco's regime. Bezhanova argues that the repressive environment brought issues of female development to the fore, and that the Bildungsroman provided a safe generic space for exploring them. This chapter analyzes one of this movement's seminal works, Rosa Chacel's *Memorias de Leticia Valle*, in conjunction with less familiar novels such as Teresa Barbero's *El último verano en el espejo*, and traces relationships among these texts and Ana María Moix's *Julia* and finally Esther Tusquet's *El mismo mar de todos los veranos*, published in the changing times of 1978. These works demonstrate progression by emphasizing the role of sexuality in female development, yet follow a pattern of circularity rather than Bildungsroman's traditional linear development towards maturity. As Bezhanova notes, this pattern reflects the impression that women do not yet feel fully empowered to pursue their own growth and remain thwarted by the obstacles society places in their paths. The narrative style of the texts is characterized by omissions, repetitions and flashbacks, thus mirroring the characters' inability to take control of their own narratives both literally and metaphorically.

This pattern characterizes the female Bildungsroman through the end of the twentieth century, as seen in Almudena Grandes's *Las edades de Lulú* and Espido Freire's *Irlanda*. In chapter 3, Bezhanova reads the circular structure of these novels as reflecting the protagonists' resistance to growth, which is in turn a reaction to the rapidly changing role of women in Spanish society. Bezhanova reads the themes of sexuality and violence that characterize these novels as strategies the protagonists employ to stave off their own development. In highlighting this refusal to grow up and take on what may seem to be a threatening freedom precisely when society is beginning to allow women to do so, Bezhanova makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the genre, its nuanced relationship to its historical context, and the range of individual responses to social conditions.

The 1990s see the emergence of what Bezhanova terms the "Reminiscent Bildungsroman," explored in the fourth chapter of her book. Josefina Aldecoa's *Mujeres de negro* and Marina Mayoral's *Recóndita armonía* situate contemporary concerns, such as the value of women's work in forging their identity, in the postwar period. This technique effectively rewrites the story of female oppression under Franco through protagonists who craft their own destinies by means not available to women at that time. The lives of these characters follow a linear progression of growth and development that contrasts sharply with the circularity and perpetual infantilization that characterized the female coming-of-age novels published at that time. This capacity for growth reflects the expanded range of possibilities for female development at the end of the twentieth century, and is reflected not only in terms of plot but also by a shift in narrative style from the Bildungsroman's traditional omniscient third person to a confident first person narrator who controls both her story and its retelling.

Narrative focus and control as well as the traditional link between gender and the genre of the Bildungsroman are upended in the "Collective Bildungsroman" Bezhanova analyzes in the final chapter of her book, Care Santos's *Okupada* and Susana Fortes's *Tiernos y traidores*. These novels expand the Bildungsroman's traditional focus on one individual to a group and include both males and females in a strategy that, according to Bezhanova, removes the conventional link between gender and development. She is careful to note that this does not suggest that gender is no longer relevant; rather, it is no longer the primary factor in an individual's journey of formation. The emerging range of possibilities for female development is thus reflected in the polyvalent narrative structure and style of the collective Bildungsroman.

By tracing the novel of female development in Spain from its nineteenth century origins to its resurgence and reformulation at the beginning of the millennium, Bezhanova identifies several significant subgenres and successfully relates observations about content, structure, and narrative style to a range of gender strategies relevant at specific sociohistorical junctures.

Well-researched and thoughtfully argued, this study will be of interest to students and scholars in range of fields including Peninsular Studies, Genre Studies, and Women's Studies, among others.

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Brown, Joan L, ed. *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Carmen Martín Gaité*. New York: MLA, 2013. Pp. 279. ISBN 978-1-60329-132-3.

In this volume, titled *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Carmen Martín Gaité*, Joan L. Brown gathers together a vast array of teaching experiences on this writer's works. Martín Gaité is, Brown reminds us in her preface, the most studied Spanish woman writer in the last three decades. Her novels *El cuarto de atrás* (translated into English as *The Back Room*) and *Nubosidad variable* (*Variable Cloud*) have been widely read and studied. This volume includes several approaches to teaching these novels as well as essays on teaching many other texts that have not been sufficiently studied yet. It also presents the pedagogical contributions of scholars from a wide variety of backgrounds, some of whom teach high school, others, community college, and still others, undergraduate and graduate courses in a traditional college setting. Furthermore, the contributors teach in the United States, Spain, Puerto Rico, England, and Ireland. In spite of this diversity, *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Carmen Martín Gaité* possesses a unifying thread throughout the book.

The volume is divided into two main parts. The first, titled "Materials," includes an introduction, pedagogical resources, and a timeline, all written by the editor. Although rather brief, compared with the second one, this section is very useful as a general account of the writer's life and her time, which provides the backbone of the second part. It also includes "Resources for Teaching," which provides the reader with background resources, critical resources, and interviews that are essential for understanding Martín Gaité's life and works.

The second part, "Approaches," includes essays by scholars who have taught classes on Martín Gaité, many of which focus on her two most renowned novels. There are also approaches to her thought, her poetry, the adaptations she made of comic strips for television, and her children's books. Brown indicates that each essay may be read as a text in itself or the entire volume may be read as a single unified text, for it is organized chronologically, providing a better understanding of how Martín Gaité's writing developed throughout time. However, when read as a whole in the order in which they are presented, some essays repeat one after another the summary of the same novel, which may become repetitive. Yet these summaries are needed when the essays are read one at a time. Most of the essays employ a very similar theoretical framework, that is, a combination of narratology, formalism, structuralism, and biographical and sociopolitical analyses that, when intertwined, facilitate a more profound cognizance of the multiple works presented in the volume. These are the backbone of the analyses the authors propose. Although she did not call herself a feminist, feminism is also an emphasized framework to understand Martín Gaité's works and thought; however, as several academics stress, women were a main concern both in her fiction as well as in her scholarly works. Some of the teachers' essays focus on an interpretation of the author's oeuvre, whereas others stress the methods they, the teachers, use to convey their knowledge of her works to their students and make them participate actively in creating their own critical understanding of the texts. One very interesting approach posited by several authors promotes creative writing based on Martín Gaité's fiction. Since some of these professors teach their courses in English, they encourage criticism on translation as a means to produce critical thinking on the literary text and the Spanish language.

The book includes two appendixes: "An Autobiographical Sketch" written in Spanish and English by Carmen Martín Gaité herself, and "A Selected Bibliography" of the author's works and their translations into English. "An Autobiographical Sketch" is especially useful when teaching

because it facilitates the critical comparison of the author's work with scholarly commentaries on the same, since its inclusion in the collection enables the reader uninitiated in the study of Martín Gaité's works to encounter, perhaps for the first time, the author's words and thoughts on her own life as well as the scholars' interpretations of her work and life. Perhaps this is why it was included in the appendix.

Approaches to Teaching the Works of Carmen Martín Gaité is a very useful collection of teaching resources for those who include any of her works or her thought in their course readings. It includes recommendations for course design, target levels of instruction, assessments, assignments, resources, and helpful insights from professors from diverse backgrounds on how to teach Martín Gaité's works, such as what works for what kind of students and what does not. Many essays provide clear objectives, ways to achieve them, and very creative assignments that students would enjoy. The authors also indicate the fields in which those interested in teaching this topic may be creative in their instruction and how to incorporate Martín Gaité's works.

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Estrada, Oswaldo, and Anna M. Nogar, eds. *Colonial Itineraries of Contemporary Mexico: Literary and Cultural Inquiries*. Tucson: U of Arizona P, 2014. Pp. 317. ISBN 978-0-81653-108-0.

Beginning with Spanish rule in the sixteenth century through Mexican Independence in 1821, *Colonial Itineraries of Contemporary Mexico: Literary and Cultural Inquiries* is an anthology that carefully considers artistic representations of Mexico's colonial era from a contemporary perspective. After an introduction by Oswaldo Estrada and Anna M. Nogar, titled "Reliving the Mexican Colonia in a New Millennium," the book is structured into four main sections where critics provide new interpretations of works produced in or about Mexico since 2000.

The first section, "Revising Colonial Ruins and Chronicles," is an exploration of how colonial writing and racism and theocracy have affected the national memory. In chapter 1, "Carlos Monsiváis: Rewriting the Nation's Memory, Playing Back the Conscience of a Mexico *Remiso*," Linda Egan credits the author for rewriting "Catholic providentialism" through scrutiny of Indian and Spanish synchronicity in religion, art, and in the governance of an independent and modern Mexico (35). In chapter 2, "Reading Colonial Ruins in Carmen Boullosa's Poetry," Jeremy Paden's reading of "El son del ángel de la ciudad" clearly points out that the poem's central indictment is directed not only at foreigners who have exploited Mexico, but also at Mexican nationals. Urban space as an interstitial space, and the juxtaposition of Mexico City in contrast to Cervantes's City of Order is how Vinodh Venkatesh frames his argument in chapter 3, "Fiction, History, and Geography: Colonial Returns to Mexico City in Héctor de Mauleón's *El secreto de la noche triste*." He deconstructs how the novel is unique compared to other historical novels that follow Linda Hutcheon's paradigm of historiographic metafiction.

The second section, "Queering Gender and Twisting Genres," questions how depictions of gendered and sexual identities have come to dominate current narrative fiction and poetry (11). In chapter 4, "Four Letters and a Funeral: Sor Juana's Writing in *Yo, la peor*," Oswaldo Estrada credits Mónica Lavín for aligning the historical figure with the tradition of the revisionist *cronista*, while adjacently validating contemporary women's writing as a political subversive act (95). In chapter 5, "Queering the *Auto Sacramental*: Anti-heteronormative Parody and the Specter of Silences in Luis Felipe Fabre's *La sodomía en la Nueva España*," Tamara R. Williams examines how original auto sacramentals were complicit in silencing the homosexual voice in Spain's imperial discourse, and demonstrates through Fabre's poem how allegorical parody is privileging queer sex. Guillermo de los Reyes-Heredia and Josué Gutiérrez-González convincingly make the point most central to the entire anthology: that issues related to religion, class, race, ethnicity, and sexual identity in colonial times are still haunting postcolonial and contemporary

Mexico in chapter 6, "Colonial Confinement, Confession, and Resistance in *Ángeles del abismo* by Enrique Serna."

A broader approach to how Mexico's colonial past has been presented internationally is found in the third section, "Global and Transatlantic Itineraries," and begins with chapter 7, "Malinche as Cinderella: Sweeping Female Agency in Search of a Global Readership," Irma Cantú's critique of Laura Esquivel's novel *Malinche* (2006) that Cantú insists prolongs the misunderstanding of Mexican female identity. In a similar vein, chapter 8, "Transatlantic Revisions of the Conquest in Inma Chacón's *La princesa india*," Cristina Carrasco notes how the author subverts the framework of the new Latin American novel which is valuable in providing readers a glimpse into "an inversion of colonial otherness," but fails in empowering her female protagonist by ultimately aligning her with a negative association of Malinche (187). The next chapters take two different approaches: in "*También la lluvia*: Of Coproductions and Re-Encounters, a Re-Vision of the Colonial," Llana Dann Luna argues that the film suggests a resumption of a harmonious relationship between Spain and its former colonies by assenting to a more nuanced interpretation about the relationships between those conquered and their oppressors (193). In "Children's Literature on the *Colonia*: *La Nao de China*, the Inquisition, Sor Juana," Emily Hind addresses how children's publications by authors including Rosa Dopazo, Agustín Ramos, and Santiago Cortés Hernández are of interest to the volume through themes of the maritime trade route between Acapulco and the Philippines, the Tribunal of the Holy Inquisition, and the biography of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (211).

The final section, "Into the Nineteenth-century *Colonia*," provides a chronological exploration of what the historical-literary iterations of the Jesuit expulsion from New Spain and a nascent independent Mexico state reveal about current political and cultural appropriations, and how the historical novel continues to evolve. Chapter 11, Anna M. Nogar's "Rethinking the Nascent Nation: Historical Fiction and Metanarrative in Pablo Soler Frost's 1767," argues that the novel simultaneously is—and isn't—in the style of a traditional nineteenth-century historical novel based on the characteristics defined by Seymour Menton. Stuart A. Day examines how Flavio González Mello explores the way in which the space between colony, coloniality, theater, and humor are related to remaining colonial structures in Mexico in chapter 12, "Out of Bounds in 1822: Humoring the Limits of Colonial Mexico." Ironically, in an anthology where many authors are positioning featured literature within the paradigm of the Latin American new historical novel, Seymour Menton, in the final chapter, "A Postcolonial Quartet, 2006–08," reasserts his claim that the genre was truly only published between 1979 and 1992, with two exceptions: Francisco Rebolledo's *Rasero* (1993), and Sergio Ramírez's *Margarita, está linda la mar* (1998). In the postscriptum, "Specifically Mexican, Universally American: Tales of Colonial Mexico and Their Legacies," Rolena Adorno considers the literary draw of "going native" and refers to contemporary interpretations of the colonial histories of Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and Gonzalo Guerrero to underscore how writers often take liberal license in reframing or erasing historical fact. She maintains that is indeed why these new fictions establish the critical need of research in Latin American literary and historical studies, as well as help us to read the colonial experience in new and in more authentic ways.

Estrada and Nogar's collection deftly challenges the ways we imagine our relationships to historical fiction, a challenge that all serious Latin American, Chicana/o, and European literary, historical, and comparative cultural studies scholars can appreciate. Overall, through critical and thoroughly cited research, the contributors' distinctive insights on a variety of genres provide readers a fresh impetus for revisiting Mexico's colonial past.

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Folkart, Jessica A. *Liminal Fiction at the Edge of the Millennium: The Ends of Spanish Identity*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2014. Pp. 241. ISBN 978-1-61148-579-0.

In *Liminal Fiction at the Edge of the Millennium: The Ends of Spanish Identity*, Jessica A. Folkart explores the notion of liminality and liminal identities in contemporary Spanish literature. This thought provoking study of narratives from Spain that span from 1992 to 2008 engages with the notion of liminality within identity theory.

Chapter 1, "On the Edge of Liminality and Spanish Identity at the Turn of the Millennium," serves as a theoretical framework. For the critic, liminality is an in-between position in time and space filled with ambiguity and creativity. Folkart argues that liminality is a key concept for understanding Spanish literature because of the way the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) and the events that flowed from it continue to haunt Spanish identity. This liminality appears, for example, in the lack of closure, which the "amnesia" regarding the victims of Franco's repression represents, and the recent, often unsuccessful, efforts to unearth the bodies of some of these victims. None of the authors whose works are treated in the book directly witnessed the Spanish Civil War. However, with the exception of El Hachmi, they were all raised during Franco's dictatorship. Their novels all include excellent examples of what the author calls liminal identities appearing under the guises of the ghost, the cannibal, the emigrant, the double and the immigrant.

Chapter 2, "The (Never) Ending Story: Apocalyptic Desire and the Liminal Fiction of Javier Marías's *Mañana en la batalla piensa en mí*," explores the haunting presence of the past in the present in Marías's acclaimed novel. Using post-apocalyptic theory, Folkart argues that Marías's novel is a narrative about endings at the individual and collective levels. Folkart highlights the fact that in post-apocalyptic narratives what matters is not simply the cataclysm that ended an era but also what comes afterwards in the liminal moment. This liminal moment negates closure and eliminates the possibility of a true ending. For this reason, the trope of repetition is key, appearing as a strategy to avoid oblivion while threatening to produce this very oblivion. Despite the chaos of this world, Marías offers his reader reassurance by defending the possibility of meaning in his text as well as the role of personal responsibility for one's past.

Chapter 3, "History Incarnate and the Liminal Body in Rosa Montero's *La hija del caníbal*," continues to examine the theme of memory and oblivion exploring their impact on the formation of a new female subjectivity at the turn of the century. By focusing on liminality and lack of boundaries, Montero presents a new kind of woman, one who does not fit the parameters of the traditional daughter, wife, or mother. As with Marías's novel, Montero's novel also presents a recovery of the past and a responsibility to deal with the memory of the Spanish Civil War. Folkart convincingly concludes that in this novel "both the recovery of the female body and the ethical incorporation of the other are essential to the recuperation of history in the dual sense of reclaiming the past as well as recovery from the cultural malaise of *el olvido*" (96).

Chapter 4, "Second-Hand Identity: Limbs, Liminality, and Transplantation in Manuel Rivas's *A man dos paños*," explores Galician identity as it presents the emigrant as another liminal subject. Using post-national theory, this chapter focuses on "the complexity of defining identity in relation to liminal space" (101). Folkart argues that the concepts of home and identity are not stable but mobile. The Spanish Civil War leaves its mark through an anecdote that has a direct impact on the character. As in Montero's novel, identity constantly changes because it is influenced by the space occupied by the subject.

Chapter 5, "Ethical In-difference and Liminal Identity in Cristina Fernández Cuba's *Parientes pobres del diablo*," follows the idea of identity as unstable by beginning with the words of Marc Augé: "A frontier is not a wall, but a threshold" (131). In this sense a frontier does not represent an ending but a new beginning, a liminal space of coexistence. Similarly to the other novels, here identity is constantly defined by its relationship with the other, which also implies an ethical

responsibility towards the other. Here Folkart uses insights taken from Emmanuel Lévinas's philosophy of infinite responsibility towards the untotalizable other.

The final chapter, "Scoring the National Hym(e)n: Sexuality, Immigration, and Liminal Identity in Najat El Hachmi's *L'últim patriarca*," emphasizes several types of marginality. El Hachmi is a female Moroccan writer born in 1979 who emigrated to Catalonia at the age of eight, facts which shape her own approach to questions of difference and identity as do her choice to write in Catalan, a minority language in Spain. This novel allows Folkart to speak about Spain's historical relations with North Africa as well as recent immigration to Spain from that region, both somewhat contested topics within Spain. Folkart argues that the return of the repressed past is embodied here by the North African immigrant, while Spain is viewed, as in the past, as the female body violated by the other. Folkart posits that El Hachmi's novel presents national identity as liminal, open to multiplicity as with the Derridian hym(e)n. In this sense the text presents a new identity, one which is both Catalan and Moroccan and which breaks with binary oppositions emerging as a new female who subverts patriarchal models of femininity and subjugation to the father.

Folkart's book is an excellent contribution to the field of contemporary Peninsular literature as it not only includes detailed, insightful analysis of novels by major contemporary authors but also because it engages incisively with diverse issues in identity theory such as gender, history, nationality, and immigration.

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Foster, David William. *Argentine, Mexican, and Guatemalan Photography: Feminist, Queer, and Post-masculinist Perspectives*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2014. Pp. xviii + 197. ISBN 978-0-29275-793-6.

David William Foster's latest collection of essays on photography in Spanish-American context admirably satisfies a pressing need for cogent and eloquent scholarship on this frequently neglected aspect of Hispanic culture. While certain Hispanic cultural products—literature, film, music, painting, and so forth—have long been examined in scholarly analysis, fine-art photography has less often been explored to reveal how its powerful images—its texts—"speak" to the cultural and aesthetic contexts in which they are created. Consequently, by publishing *Argentine, Mexican, and Guatemalan Photography: Feminist, Queer, and Post-masculinist Perspectives*, the author proposes "to demonstrate not only the imperative to take Latin American photography seriously in the academy, but also to model seriously ways to talk about photographic texts" (xiii). In thirteen concise chapters, Foster certainly realizes his goal: he applies his considerable critical and interpretive skills to the photography of several of the most acclaimed artists of Mexico, Argentina, and one from Guatemala, focusing his expert critical eye on how their works confirm, interrogate, or subvert traditional cultural norms related to gender and sexuality.

Foster begins with a short preface in which he briefly explains his approach to the analysis of the photographic works in the subsequent chapters, how this analysis is directly related to the four main areas of his monumental bibliography of published scholarship (urban cultural production, gender and sexuality studies, cultural creation by Jewish artists, and the exploration of ideological principles in the elaboration and reception of creative works), and a quick overview of the content and ordering of the chapters. The photography under analysis includes works that span the approximately hundred years from early twentieth-century anonymous stereographic photographs of Mexican prostitutes, to twenty-first-century works that comment on the monstrous realities of political violence and social inequality in Mexico, Argentina and Guatemala.

The collection, as the author notes, is comprised, in large part, of previously published material, much of which has been revised and expanded for this handsome volume. In this

category are essays devoted to the work of the Argentine Grete Stern, Annemarie Heinrich, Silvina Frydlewsky, Marcos Zimmermann, and Marcos López; Mexican photographers Daniela Rossell, Pedro Meyer, and Graciela Iturbide; and the Guatemalan Daniel Hernández-Salazar. New essays, published for the first time in this volume, focus on Alessandra Sanguinetti, Helen Zout (Argentina), and Stefan Ruiz (Mexico). In spite of the differences in time period, location, and thematic content, the studies form a well-integrated whole that gives the reader a good sense of the wide variety and exceptional quality of these Spanish-American photographers and their work. But, as Foster makes explicit in his preface, the reader should not expect a comprehensive history of the photography of the three countries in the title; instead, this is a series of essays that specifically explore “feminist, queer, and post-masculinist perspectives” in the work of a selected group of photographers. The three perspectives he lists correspond to the classic triumvirate that are viewed as generating coherent human identities and stabilizing the privilege of masculine, heterosexual males in western societies: biological sex (body), desire (sexual orientation), and gender (performance).

Certainly one of the most appealing features of this collection lies in the fact that each essay illuminates the photographic texts with detailed, subtle, and insightful readings, written in a clear, elegant, and succinct style. And while all of the essays are noteworthy in their precise study of the aesthetic, generic, sexual, and cultural aspects of the images, particularly admirable are Foster’s analysis of Stern’s magnificent photomontages, Heinrich’s surprisingly complex portraits of women, Frydlewsky’s documentary images of the *cartoneros* and the economically distressed in Buenos Aires, Meyer’s critical inquiry into masculine authority figures in Mexican society, López’s playful photos that illustrate issues of homosocialism and homoeroticism in Argentine culture, Zout’s tragic and disturbing images that bear witness to the aftermath of political terror, and finally, Hernández-Salazar’s poetic views of ethnic and gender oppression in Guatemala.

Among the many excellent qualities of these essays, what I believe to be most satisfying and appealing is the manner in which Foster links his detailed analyses of the individual photographs to the specificities of the cultural setting in which they were produced. That is, the author never loses sight of the fact that these are, at the same time, constructed aesthetic artifacts, as well as socially significant documents produced at a specific historical moment in a specific cultural milieu. As a result, readers of several disciplines (e.g., students and instructors of Hispanic studies, gender studies, and photography) will find this collection of great utility and benefit.

I must add, though, that some readers at a high level of expertise might wish for a more thorough discussion of the theoretical bases that underlie the author’s approach. Foster presumes a certain level of familiarity with complex concepts related to gender and sexuality, as well as current critical practice in photographic art, and instead of including a more in-depth dialogue with the theoretical assumptions implicit in the concepts he employs in his analysis, Foster simply refers the reader to studies included in the list of works cited. If the author is hoping to make his essays more accessible to a wider, more general audience of readers, this strategy does make perfect sense, but for an academic audience, the author’s choice to leave the discussion of complex theoretical concepts implicit might cause some scholars to wish for a more precise exploration of the critical apparatus that underlies the author’s approach.

Of greater concern for me, however, is the fact that most of the chapters are illustrated with black-and-white photographs to accompany the analyses. Unfortunately, not all of the photos that Foster includes were originally shot in black-and-white format, and the reader/viewer may come away with a mistaken impression of the photographs—in spite of the author’s careful analyses which include references to color, whenever appropriate. I presume that the cost of publishing a book in full color was prohibitive—the volume is already rather expensive (\$65 USD and \$82 CDN)—, and the author may have made the decision to offer an altered image as a compromise. The photos do give the reader a reasonable idea of what he is examining, but the black-and-white reduction of many of the images is unfortunate.

Despite these concerns, I enthusiastically recommend this volume. It is a valuable resource text for anyone interested in a powerful and penetrating examination of gender and sexuality in a variety of Hispanic contexts, and how those issues are portrayed, questioned, and challenged in the fine-art photography of Spanish America.

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Paldao, Carlos E., y Laura Pollastri, eds. *Entre el ojo y la letra: El microrrelato hispanoamericano actual*. New York: ANLE, 2014. Pp. 647. ISBN 978-0-61584-088-8.

Entre el ojo y la letra: El microrrelato hispanoamericano actual inaugura la colección *Pulso Herido* que publica la Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española (ANLE), cuyo primer número, tal y como se indica en el subtítulo, está enteramente dedicado al microrrelato hispanoamericano. El volumen, coordinado por Carlos Paldao y Laura Pollastri, se compone de dos grandes bloques. Por un lado, “Ópticas” reúne en cinco secciones más de una veintena de ensayos de reconocidos especialistas que ofrecen, desde perspectivas varias, un balance de la evolución y del estado actual de este género—cuestión esta también a dilucidar—en la literatura hispánica. Además de ofrecer múltiples reflexiones sobre el tema, el segundo gran bloque, “Microcosmos”, presenta una valiosa antología de relatos brevísimos creados por un total de cincuenta autores contemporáneos de diferentes latitudes y muy variadas trayectorias profesionales. Se trata de un trabajo colectivo, originalmente concebido a lo largo del tiempo entre David Lagmanovich y Carlos Paldao en colaboración con Juan Armando Epple, entre otros. El proyecto logra materializarse ahora como homenaje al primero, de quien Laura Pollastri fue alumna, así como a Dolores Koch, la otra gran pionera de este campo de estudio a principios de la década de 1980.

La primera sección, “Rescates”, presenta una serie de ensayos que hacen hincapié en la labor crítica y teórica—e incluso creativa en el caso de Lagmanovich—de los homenajeados. La aportación de Dolores Koch acerca de la narrativa mexicana de Julio Torri, Juan José Arreola, Augusto Monterroso y René Avilés Fabila determina los parámetros que singularizan y definen sus características: “prosa bisémica, humorismo escéptico y rescate de formas literarias antiguas (fábulas y bestiarios) junto con nuevos formatos no literarios provenientes de los medios de comunicación” (39). Por otro lado, Lagmanovich desgrana con precisión los tipos de recursos lingüísticos que se establecen para lograr la cohesión sintáctica y léxica que caracteriza al microrrelato.

“En busca del canon” corresponde a la segunda sección, la cual se abre con un estudio de Javier Perucho sobre Edmundo Valadés y su papel como promotor del minicuento mexicano desde su faceta periodística, además de ser artífice del mismo. En “Precursores de la minificción hispanoamericana”, Epple argumenta que es el crecimiento desmedido, acelerado y deshumanizado de la urbe moderna lo que genera una respuesta estética que refleja un nuevo modo de relacionarse unos con otros, más ocasional, esporádico y pasajero. Si bien de forma dispersa todavía, menciona a Rubén Darío, Leopoldo Lugones, José Antonio Ramos Sucre, Luis Vidales, Vicente Huidobro y Ramón Gómez de la Serna como iniciadores de una era que se consolida a partir de 1943 con la publicación de *Cuentos breves y extraordinarios* por Borges y Bioy Casares. La lista de nombres consagrados en el campo de la microficción es amplia. Además de los arriba mencionados, surgen repetidas veces figuras tales como Cortázar, Denevi, Anderson Imbert, Peri Rossi y Valenzuela, al lado de otras muchas voces emergentes. La cuestión genérica es trazada por Gabriela Espinosa, quien recorre los intentos de sistematización de las composiciones breves de acuerdo a su tendencia (“narrativista” o “transgenérica”) y a los factores externos (académicos, editoriales y culturales) a que se ven sometidos. Tomassini y Colombo retoman en su ensayo el debate en torno a su denominación y legitimación. La novedad estriba en la proliferación de la ficción breve a partir de los años noventa y su consecuente visibilidad en congresos, volúmenes,

revistas y concursos propiciados por las nuevas tecnologías. Dicha proliferación es a su vez estudiada por Lauro Zavala con respecto a las tendencias dentro de las tradiciones literarias de Hispanoamérica. La existencia de una tradición de la brevedad peruana corre a cargo de Vásquez Guevara, quien determina los distintos periodos con una elaborada y esclarecedora bibliografía. Por último, Miguel Gomes analiza dos obras recientes en las que creación estética y reacción afectiva confluyen y confirman la superación del paradigma posmoderno.

La tercera sección, “Huellas, contactos y deslizamientos”, presenta cuatro ensayos temáticamente conectados. El primero, de Francisca Noguerol, vincula la “brevedad” argentina y española enriquecida por los múltiples desplazamientos—políticos, económicos y culturales. Para Irene Andrés-Suárez, a pesar de reconocer que la influencia de Borges llegó tardía a la península, es innegable que el legado borgiano ha dado su fruto en el microrrelato español con la obra de jóvenes autores contemporáneos, entre los que destaca Andrés Neuman. Violeta Rojo y Gloria Ramírez desarrollan en sus ensayos el tema de la intertextualidad, la primera, por su condición deleitosa en la lectura del minitexto y la segunda, en cuanto a la categoría de actante que lo transforma.

“Exploraciones” abre paso a la cuarta sección con un exhaustivo estudio de la obra de Torri por Serge Zaïtzeff. Alba Omil estudia las creaciones breves de Anderson Imbert, cuyas fantasías verosímiles y plenas de lirismo cautivan al lector. Las microfábulas de Luisa Valenzuela son analizadas por Rosa Tezanos-Pinto, quien recorre y clasifica el muestrario alfabético del mundo animal seleccionado por la autora. Fernando Valls nos descubre el talento creativo e insólito ingenio de Isabel Mellado, una violinista chilena afincada en España, en su obra *El perro que comía silencio*, cuya temática gira en torno al amor, la soledad y el silencio. Un ensayo de la pluma de Alberto Vital y Lucila Herrera descubre la faceta muy breve de Alfonso Reyes, desarrollada con diferentes modelos genéricos: la visión, la brizna, el esquema y la hipótesis. Realidad y fantasía se yuxtaponen en la microficción de José María Merino y dan paso a otras realidades experimentales (cósmicas, oníricas, metamórficas), las cuales explora Ángeles Encinar. Miriam Di Gerónimo plantea un esquema matemático donde lógica y literatura se entrelazan con “cuatro axiomas: brevedad, economía, silogismo y reescritura” (445).

La quinta y última sección, “Contrapunto”, expone en forma de diálogo entre Raúl Brasca y Rosalba Campra una serie de profundas reflexiones que contribuyen a esclarecer las particularidades de la microficción y sus diferencias con el cuento. El valor de la intuición, la insinuación, la interpretación de lo que no se dice son sus cualidades inherentes. Para Brasca, no se hace camino con los personajes, como señalaba Quiroga en su decálogo, sino que se da “un salto mortal” (460), sorprendente e intenso para el lector, a quien le corresponde alimentar su imaginación con los detalles.

Se trata de un sustancioso ejemplar que hace acopio de belleza e imaginación en su estructura y diseño. Una brevísima y exquisita selección de fotografías de Gerardo Piña-Rosales adereza la obra y encapsula por su valor intrínseco el significado de su contenido.

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Pino, José Manuel del, ed. *America, the Beautiful: La presencia de Estados Unidos en la cultura española contemporánea*. Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2014. Pp. 307. ISBN 978-84-8489-769-9.

Como editor del volumen *America the Beautiful: La presencia de Estados Unidos en la cultura española contemporánea*, José Manuel del Pino retorna en 2014 a un área de investigación sobre la que quince años antes ya editó, en colaboración con Francisco La Rubia Prado, la colección de ensayos *El hispanismo en los Estados Unidos: Discursos críticos/prácticas textuales* (Madrid: Visor, 1999). Dicho volumen intentaba ilustrar las diferencias críticas, teóricas y metodológicas entre el hispanismo practicado en los Estados Unidos respecto al que por entonces se producía en la Península Ibérica. Si aquel volumen contaba con colaboradores estadounidenses y españoles

establecidos en universidades americanas y recogía ensayos de gran diversidad temática y metodológica, *America the Beautiful* ofrece textos de autores norteamericanos, incluyendo un mexicano, Pedro Ángel Palou, y españoles que se han formado o trabajado en los Estados Unidos y cuya obra crítica, artística o literaria se ha visto influida por dicho país. Además, los textos que componen este libro comparten un foco central de atención, que queda expresado en el epígrafe: *La presencia de Estados Unidos en la cultura española contemporánea*. Por encima de la distancia temporal y de las diferencias de enfoque, ambos volúmenes comparten un afán pedagógico y una voluntad de estimular conversaciones entre hispanistas de ambas orillas del Atlántico.

Con todo, el precedente más directo de *America the Beautiful*, por su cercanía cronológica, conceptual, temática, organizativa y metodológica, es el volumen *Ventanas sobre el Atlántico*, coeditado por Carlos X. Ardavín Trabanco y quien esto escribe, cuya primera edición data de abril de 2011. *America the Beautiful* adopta el planteamiento multidisciplinar de *Ventanas*, y análogamente incluye entre sus colaboradores a críticos literarios y cinematográficos junto a artistas y escritores. Su organización interna es similar, con cuatro partes dedicadas respectivamente al cine, televisión y medios; la literatura; las artes; y el testimonio y ensayo. *America the Beautiful* sigue también el ejemplo de *Ventanas* en su combinación de ensayos críticos y testimonios personales. Varios de sus colaboradores, Ana Merino, Félix de la Concha y el propio del Pino, ya lo fueron de *Ventanas*, y el ensayo de este último es una versión ampliada del que apareció en dicho libro. Es justo decir que *America the Beautiful* parte del modelo establecido por *Ventanas* y, siguiendo sus líneas maestras, lo desarrolla, expande y actualiza.

Producto de un curso colectivo organizado por del Pino en la Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo en agosto de 2011, *America the Beautiful* se compone de doce ensayos y testimonios a los que se añaden una introducción y un prólogo a cargo, respectivamente, de del Pino y de César Nombela. En su introducción, del Pino pone énfasis en la “americanización” de la cultura española de los siglos XX y XXI y resume las aportaciones de los diversos ensayos y testimonios del volumen. Román Gubern se acerca a la figura de Samuel Bronston y las películas históricas que produjo en España entre finales de los 50 y comienzos de los 60. María Pilar Rodríguez indaga en la evolución de las representaciones de los Estados Unidos en tres películas españolas—*Bienvenido Mr. Marshall*, *La línea del cielo* y *Cosas que nunca te dije*—separadas entre sí por cuatro décadas. Helena Medina repasa la evolución de los géneros de televisión americanos en España. Carlota Benet Cros comenta la influencia del cine de Hollywood sobre la vida y la obra de Terenci Moix y Pere Gimferrer. Antonio Gómez López-Quñones explora las maniobras retóricas mediante las que Antonio Muñoz Molina representa la ciudad de Nueva York en *Ventanas de Manhattan*. Juan Francisco Ferré reflexiona sobre la americanización de la cultura mundial y analiza ciertas alegorías literarias de los Estados Unidos. José Manuel del Pino se enfoca en tres novelas—*El inquilino* y *La velocidad de la luz*, de Javier Cercas, y *Un momento de descanso*, de Antonio Orejudo—cuyos protagonistas son europeos que viven o han vivido en el mundo universitario estadounidense. Ana Merino traza la influencia estadounidense en el cómic español a través de las décadas. Alberto Medina destaca la promoción del arte contemporáneo español en Nueva York y la condición emblemática de dicha ciudad para los jóvenes artistas. El pintor Félix de la Concha subraya la importancia del paisaje americano en su carrera artística. Agustín Fernández Mallo explica la influencia del concepto americano de espacio sobre su propia producción literaria. Pedro Ángel Palou concluye con unas reflexiones sobre el estatus subordinado de las comunidades hispanas en los Estados Unidos.

En conjunto, los textos de *America the Beautiful* abarcan temas variados, plantean preguntas diversas y lanzan múltiples propuestas para la reflexión y el diálogo. La calidad de las contribuciones es en general notable, destacando por su originalidad, profundidad y riqueza intelectual las de Antonio Gómez López-Quñones y Alberto Medina. El valioso testimonio de Félix de la Concha va acompañado de abundantes ilustraciones que le otorgan un especial interés. En el polo opuesto, varios ensayos se enfocan en textos, autores o asuntos bastante conocidos sin aportar demasiadas novedades; un ensayo en particular omite reconocer el importante corpus

crítico existente sobre los textos y autores de los que se ocupa. También se echa en falta un índice onomástico al final del volumen. Pese a estas observaciones, el nuevo libro de José Manuel del Pino es una digna adición a la obra de este destacado hispanista y un muy bienvenido aporte al estudio crítico de las relaciones artísticas y literarias entre España y los Estados Unidos.

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Robalino, Gladys, ed. *Female Amerindians in Early Modern Spanish Theater*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2014. Pp. 234. ISBN 978-1-61148-610-0.

Female Amerindians in Early Modern Spanish Theater es una colección de ensayos escritos por diferentes especialistas en el teatro español del Siglo de Oro que nos ofrece una visión amplia y diversa de la representación de las mujeres nativas del continente americano durante la época de la conquista. Sin dejar de lado el aspecto étnico y la carga estética que el Barroco tenga en estas comedias, es la teoría feminista la que organiza las ideas de los respectivos autores y autoras de los ensayos, con la intención de colocar al ente femenino y al sujeto indígena como un constructo de su época variable en función de las necesidades ideológicas y estéticas del dramaturgo. Esta doble otredad, mujer e indígena, es por tanto el eje principal de las perspectivas críticas que aparecen en todos los ensayos del libro.

En el capítulo 1, Melissa Figueroa utiliza la conquista llevada a cabo por los españoles en el continente americano como una metáfora de la conquista sobre el cuerpo de la mujer indígena. Es una conquista que replica los paradigmas de relación de poder hombre-mujer preexistentes en la cultura española y europea de aquellos momentos. En el siguiente capítulo, Gladys Robalino y Ronna Feit exploran el papel jugado por las mujeres indígenas en el proceso de la conquista y expansión de las nuevas tierras; este papel las coloca paralelamente en propiciadoras y opositoras de la ocupación española. En el capítulo 3, Glenda Nieto-Cuevas nos ofrece un análisis comparativo en el que muestra de qué manera los autores usan la mitología clásica greco-romana y los tratados demonológicos de la época para construir un sujeto femenino indígena. Se trata de personajes míticos en su bravura guerrera pero malignos en su relación con la brujería. Por tanto, la mujer indígena aparece como un ser que contradice el orden natural asignado a los miembros de su género y contra el que hay que luchar. En el capítulo 4, María Ferrer-Lightner nos ofrece una visión distinta a la anterior al analizar al personaje inca *Guacolda* de *La aurora en Copacabana*, de Calderón de la Barca, como un personaje mariano que consigue la salvación de su pueblo a través del proceso de cristianización. El capítulo 5, de Judith Cavallero, también estudia la visión positivizada del indígena a través del análisis del personaje de *Tucapela* en la obra de teatro *Palabras a los reyes y obras de los Pizarros*, de Vélez de Guevara. Este personaje femenino es el portador de un discurso que humaniza a su pueblo, el cual además habita un continente convertido en personaje a través de una alegorización necesaria para representar la bienvenida a la cristiandad que traen los conquistadores. En el capítulo 6, Gladys Robalino discute la importancia de los matrimonios entre conquistadores y conquistadas como medio de propagación de las ideas políticas, económicas y culturales de la metrópoli sobre las nuevas tierras y sus gentes. Esther Fernández explora, en el capítulo 7, diversas obras de teatro a través de los siglos XVI y XVII en las que aparecen mujeres indígenas. Este estudio diacrónico permite observar un cambio progresivo en el contenido ideológico de dichos personajes. Así, para esta especialista las mujeres indígenas en el teatro clásico español evolucionan desde constituir un mero elemento lírico en el conjunto del drama hasta convertirse en un medio de difusión de ideas a favor del proceso de expansión colonial. Erin Cowling continúa en el capítulo 8 con el análisis de la mujer indígena asimilada. Esta no solo acepta las nuevas ideas de los conquistadores, especialmente el cristianismo, sino que se convierte en herramienta de su expansión entre el resto de los nativos. Por último, el capítulo 9, escrito por María Quiroz Taub, hace un análisis del personaje *Fresia* en la obra de Lope de Vega *Arauco domado*. En este estudio, María Quiroz

explica cómo *Fresia*, al oponerse al proceso expansivo español de un modo extremo, sirve también como medio de exaltación del heroísmo de los conquistadores.

El libro constituye una valiosa aportación a los estudios del teatro clásico español del Siglo de Oro. Como nos dice Gladys Robalino en su introducción al volumen, las obras de teatro españolas de los siglos XVI y XVII pueden ser analizadas desde distintos puntos de vista. Aquellas centradas en personajes de las colonias, especialmente los indígenas, se han estudiado desde un punto de vista etnológico, en el que el peso de las diferencias de género no ha sido considerado. Se hacen necesarios estudios como los incluidos en esta colección de ensayos que indaguen más en la problematización de la doble otredad, sujeto indígena y mujer. De este modo podremos alcanzar una mayor comprensión de los mecanismos literarios imperantes en la España imperial de los Austrias y, a través de ellos, de los mecanismos ideológicos de los que se nutrían los autores.

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Sousa, Ronald. *On Emerging from Hyper-nation: Saramago's "Historical" Trilogy*. West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 2014. Pp. 197. ISBN 987-1-61249-349-7.

In the world of academic, critical writing on literature, the personal narrative is a rare occurrence. Even less frequent would then be a personal narrative, which begins by describing the genesis of the project contained within. As a unique twist to the conventional critical narrative, Sousa's study, titled *On Emerging from Hyper-nation: Saramago's "Historical" Trilogy*, seeks to engender a discussion on how literary analysis may reveal the reasons why a reader, in this case the author himself, can have a "smile" on his face when reading Saramago's three historical novels, *Memorial do convento*, *O ano da morte de Ricardo Reis*, and *A história do cerco de Lisboa*.

The book is divided into four chapters with an introduction and a conclusion; the primary themes of the book seem to be as much a review of the primary characteristics these works share as the way in which these themes have resonated in the author's perspective on Saramago's work and literature as a whole. The introduction (1–9) serves as a delineation of general critical theory on such topics as hermeneutics and historicity in literature, as well as a discussion of—and personal engagement with—theoretical texts; the author speaks about what he refers to as "the 'smile' question," or what in the reading of these works has caused an emotional response in him personally. Chapter 1 is a discussion on existing perspectives and analyses of the historical context of the Salazar period and, to a lesser degree, on Saramago's work. Chapter 2 dedicates itself to a study on *Memorial do Convento*, whose analysis makes much reference to the author's "smile" from the introduction. This mostly intuitive discussion leads the reader to what Sousa calls the "'readership pact' between author and reader" (56), or the "implied reader-author pact" (77), a necessary symptom of Saramago's palimpsest-like narrative voice and the key to deeper understanding of his overall work. The analysis turns toward a view of the work as home of the "fascist joke" (63–70), or a cycle of re-reading and mutable comprehension of the text. The author takes from various fields, such as sociology, history, and psychology. As an example, references to extraliterary influences such as that of Freud (39, 63) in his analysis give breadth to the author's perspective. Interestingly, the final page (78) is mostly in Latin, an aspect to touch upon again later. Chapter 3 reveals more of Sousa's insights on *O ano da morte de Ricardo Reis*. There is a discussion of possible historical reasons for the explosion of readers of Saramago in the 1980s and early 1990s and their differing perspectives on the work. The author also summarizes his experience with students and other readers of the text, and their unique readings, by attempting to divide up scientifically the reading public into four basic types based on the period and social context in which each would have lived. He also makes reference to historical trauma as an interpretive stepping-stone for each readership's understanding of the novel. The notion of official sites of public memory is critiqued in the work, according to Sousa, as reference to the Salazar-period practice of creating monuments to the nation. The study continues with

a discussion on the impotence of the regime's discourse and subsequent impotence of action against it on the part of individuals living under the regime. This leads to an analysis of the reception and interpretation of Saramago's works outside of Portugal, criticizing the readings of the novel on the part of US reviewers. Chapter 4 studies *A história do cerco de Lisboa*, suggesting a reading based on the reader's own agency within the novel, rather than becoming the implied reader while the narrator takes agency. Sousa seems to see less room for interpretation under such a perspective. This pulls the informed reader, in this case Sousa himself, into a meta-literary identification of the reader within the "implied reader" of the "author-reader pact" context the author has described previously. There exists also an intertextual dialog with *A Ilustre Casa de Ramires* (Eça de Queirós) as part of this renewed pact. The protagonist's self-image becomes that of the player in a game (the author likens this to the author-avatar relationship of a video game) leading to a new understanding of the text and its protagonists as "cybernized" (135–37).

Sousa then opens a second line of inquiry—one of the "revival" of the historiographical in Portuguese society during and after the Salazar regime. He comments on historicity and social construction as an internalized discourse within the characters' dialog. There is a final discussion on possible readings of the text based on a focus on either the two lovers' interactions, or the protagonist's interaction with the text he is editing, as metaphor for the epistemology of Portuguese nationalist discourse. This exists, according to the argument, as part of a re-established agency on the part of the Portuguese subject in Saramago's work. Sousa concludes with an explanation of the "smile" question which has appeared in various moments since the beginning of the study, elucidating his position as both reader and admirer of the text under analysis and their place in the anti-fascist canon of Portuguese literature.

Such an author-guided reading of the texts, in context with existing critical readings and contextualization in post-Salazar Portugal, is not only useful but opens the study's readers to a level of comprehension and intimacy not usual for most books of this type. It is here that we find the true innovation the study offers—an unusual combination of the personal and critical narratives which, in their unity, make that much more personal (and personable) the works of Saramago to the readership. Also, the principal themes studied seem connected insofar as the author's reading, based in large part on previous scholarship, informs the reader. The apparent emphasis on the enigma of interpretation and epistemological ambiguity in Saramago's trilogy also takes center stage in the study, an important part of Saramago's narrative strategies.

Since the book is both intimate and critical, a balance would need to be struck between moments of personal pleasure and objective interpretation. The book, in many cases, utilizes an unnecessarily dense prose to rephrase well-established critical analyses. It is also much more of a personal and self-referential essay than expected for a single-author study, an aspect which combined, at times unharmoniously, with the material studied. There were also several authorial decisions which do not facilitate comprehension by the readership. For example, almost a page of text in Latin is incomprehensible to English and Portuguese speakers and serves only to confuse the reader. There seems to be no explanation of this offered to the reader, nor does it seem relevant to either the study itself or the text studied. Another example is the analysis based on Freudian interpretation, rather than what may be the more logical and objective discussion on a possible influence of Freudian theory on the writer or characters. This use of a rather dated source (relative to the plethora of more recent studies in the field of psychology which refute almost all of Freud's claims) as a base for analysis does not lend credence to this aspect of the study. Sousa also makes several assertions, which, while proof of a strong intuition on the subject, are provided with little backing from other sources (such as quoting Bürger (28), analyzing possible conclusions to the quote, then stating Bürger would not agree with him). The Works Cited section and Index are also rather short for such an undertaking (although explicable given the personal nature of the book), conveying the feeling that perhaps the author has not included as wide a range of possible primary and secondary sources concerning the topics studied as may have been warranted.

Despite the challenges the text may pose to its readerships, Sousa's study serves as a fascinating hybrid, a personal and critical essay on Saramago's historical fiction. Indeed, in this sense it may just serve as a trailblazer for more essays of this type in the coming years.

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Vivar, Francisco. *Cervantes y los límites del ser*. Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2014. Pp. 169. ISBN 978-8-48489-831-3.

Una vez más, Francisco Vivar se aventura en la escritura de un libro erudito sobre la obra de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. Sin embargo, esta vez el crítico no se concentra en una sola de las producciones literarias de Cervantes, sino que examina igualmente varios personajes sacados de la narrativa y del teatro cervantinos. Por ejemplo, el autor estudia a los dos protagonistas del *Quijote*, a Rincón y Cortado, a Persiles y Sigismunda, a Pedro de Urdemalas, entre otros. Como muy bien anuncia el título del libro de Vivar—*Cervantes y los límites del ser*—, estos personajes llegarán a situaciones extremas: los personajes enfrentarán lo que Karl Jaspers denominó las *Grenzsituationen* (situaciones límite) en su relación con el ser (esto es, con la Realidad más fundamental). No obstante, una vez llegados a ese límite, se producirá un cambio en ellos: aceptarán la realidad tal y como es. Cada uno de los personajes se embarcaría en un viaje diferente que concluye también de forma diferente. Las diferencias en el viaje de sus vidas dividen los capítulos del libro de Vivar: mientras algunos de los personajes se obsesionan con el conocimiento, por ejemplo Tomás Rodaja—protagonista de *El licenciado Vidriera*—, otros, en cambio, actúan llevados por la necesidad. Como ilustración de lo anterior, hay que mencionar al joven de dieciocho o de diecinueve años que se encuentra con don Quijote y que le explica al caballero andante su decisión de convertirse en soldado.

Tras una breve introducción sobre la realización del equilibrio y de la armonía por parte de los personajes literarios, Vivar comienza con los más jóvenes protagonistas cervantinos. En *Rinconete y Cortadillo*, la libertad esperada de los muchachos homónimos se desvanece con las imposiciones de Monipodio. De igual modo, Carriazo, en *La ilustre fregona*, regresa a casa después de haber sido víctima de burlas, de haber recibido una gran paliza y de haber sido encarcelado en Toledo. “La inocencia épica”—título de este primer capítulo—se perdería, imponiéndose sobre ellos la dura y la trágica realidad, que es la del ser.

El segundo capítulo trata sobre el conocimiento de los límites y, en concreto, sobre conocer los límites mismos del conocimiento. Esto llevaría a pensar, sin duda, en el gran proyecto de la filosofía crítica de Immanuel Kant, quien pretendió en su filosofía establecer los límites, las condiciones y los alcances del conocimiento humano. Adquirir conocimiento será la única actividad de Tomás Rodaja, hasta el punto de que esa actividad llega a convertirse para él en una obsesión. La locura de Rodaja se asemeja a la absurdidad del “famoso estudiante” en el *Quijote*. El joven estudiante perderá tanto el sentido común como la cordura y le será imposible diferenciar entre la certeza y la estupidez. El resultado de la obsesión en el conocimiento desembocará en la trivialidad, la banalización o el sinsentido del ser. Al capítulo sobre los límites del conocimiento le seguirá el capítulo sobre el deseo. Poner el conocimiento y el deseo en una relación tan cercana argumentativamente puede provocar desconexión; sin embargo, se produce un firme vínculo entre la fuerza del conocimiento y la fuerza del deseo. Este tercer capítulo sobre el deseo está protagonizado por Rodolfo, el violador de Leocadia en *La fuerza de la sangre*—y por el rey en *Pedro de Urdemalas*, quien intenta abusar de Inés. Según Vivar, Cervantes encuentra el equilibrio en estas obras: el exceso de deseo se mitiga, por un lado, con el casamiento de Rodolfo y de Leocadia y, por otro lado, con la resignación del rey ante la negativa de Inés. En otros términos: las situaciones literarias de los personajes suponen un equilibrio ontológico.

“El don de la metamorfosis”, el cuarto capítulo, examina la vida de Pedro de Urdemalas. Cabe destacar que, según Vivar, la vida de Pedro de Urdemalas recuerda la del propio Miguel

de Cervantes Saavedra. Pedro posee una magnífica capacidad de transformación en la realidad vivida, esto es, él entendería el ser como metamorfosis. Con todo, esa metamorfosis puede llegar a ser peligrosa para la vida y, por ello, el personaje decidiría seguir transformándose pero de una manera mucho más segura: se convierte en actor. Ahora, Pedro procederá a una verdadera metamorfosis ontológica: será rey, será papa y será matachín. Al igual que la constante transformación puede llevar al peligro para la vida, la fuerza de la imaginación puede llevar al delirio en la vida. En el quinto capítulo, sobre los duques en el *Quijote* y sobre el personaje de *El celoso extremeño*, Carrizales, la imaginación se impone a la razón. Es decir: el ser, construido por la imaginación, vence sobre el ser que es establecido por la razón. Los duques y Carrizales, de este modo, dejarán de vivir en la realidad y pasarán a vivir en una segunda realidad paralela o—como Vivar lo afirma con justeza—ellos viven en la irrealidad.

Vivar titula su último capítulo “La necesidad”. Aunque haciendo referencias más bien tangenciales a Sancho Panza y a Tomás Rodaja de *El licenciado Vidriera*, la guerra es el tópico central del capítulo. La guerra sería una necesidad del ser para su subsistencia—ya habría anotado Heráclito de Éfeso en su fragmento 52: “la guerra es tanto el padre como el rey de todas las cosas, designa a los que serán dioses o serán hombres, y ha creado a quienes son esclavos y a quienes son libres” (la traducción es mía). Y, por lo tanto, ese joven que en el *Quijote* está atrapado por la pobreza necesita ir a la guerra para sobrevivir y, en consecuencia y a su pesar, es víctima involuntaria de esa necesidad bélica. El libro concluye con el epílogo y con la peregrinación de Persiles y de Sigismunda. Los dos enamorados, así como la obra misma de Cervantes, emanarían amor, belleza y perfección—tres caras del ser para Cervantes. Justo después de afirmar que la luz triunfa sobre las tinieblas y finalizar el epílogo, Vivar incluye la bibliografía y el índice onomástico.

Cervantes y los límites del ser es una aportación valiosa a los estudios cervantinos, sobre todo porque ofrece un análisis de varias obras de este escritor del Siglo de Oro español. Vivar conoce a fondo la obra cervantina, conectando con facilidad y con plausibilidad al “famoso estudiante” del *Quijote* con Tomás Rodaja de las *Novelas ejemplares*—para mencionar tan solo un ejemplo. Ahora bien, las introducciones de los capítulos que traen referencias a Ulises, a Adán y Eva, a Prometeo, por citar únicamente cuatro personajes literarios, no muestran conexión con los análisis sobre los personajes cervantinos. Aparte de esta desconexión, los estudiosos de los siglos XVI y XVII disfrutarán, beneficiándose, de un volumen bien escrito sobre las limitaciones y sobre los cambios en los personajes creados por Cervantes.

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Linguistics, Language, and Media

Brown, Joan L., and Carmen Martín Gaité. *Conversaciones creadoras: Mastering Spanish Conversation*. 4th ed. Boston: Cengage, 2016. Pp. 336. ISBN 978-1-28583-738-3.

Conversaciones creadoras: Mastering Spanish Conversation es un libro de texto diseñado para cursos de conversación de nivel intermedio hasta avanzado según las normas de clasificación de competencias lingüísticas establecidas por el American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages’ Oral Proficiency Interview, mejor conocidas por las siglas ACTFL OPI. En el portal de dicha entidad se explican en detalle los diferentes niveles de habilidad comunicativa bajo el título ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines C Speaking (véase www.actfl.org). Los materiales suplementarios para los instructores son muy valiosos, debido a la calidad de las sugerencias para preparar las lecciones, ejercicios, claves de calificación, pruebas y exámenes, todos localizables en el Instructor Companion Website. La edición para instructores viene acompañada de tres discos compactos de audio.

Como es sabido, estos cursos se suelen ofrecer a partir del tercer año de estudio de la lengua, es decir, en los niveles trescientos y cuatrocientos. Por ese motivo, en la Introducción, los autores indican que el método aplicado para lograr sus objetivos se basa en el aprendizaje activo o experiencial por una razón sencilla y ampliamente conocida: algunos textos de enseñanza de idiomas adolecen por exceso de reglas gramaticales y de ejercicios que no conducen al desarrollo ni de la comunicación oral ni de la escrita. Como resultado, los estudiantes reciben entrenamiento para llenar espacios en blanco con el vocabulario o las formas gramaticales apropiadas pero no están capacitados para interactuar en situaciones reales, es decir, fuera del aula. Ahí es donde radica la diferencia entre el aprendizaje académico y el experiencial o activo.

Conversaciones creadoras incluye una sección gramatical y otra de vocabulario en cada uno de los doce capítulos divididos en cuatro unidades, es decir, tres por cada una de ellas: Capítulo preliminar, Los viajes y el transporte (capítulos 1–3); Las familias, las amistades y la vida diaria (capítulos 4–6); La educación, la salud y los deportes (capítulos 7–9); La cultura, los empleos y la vivienda (capítulos 10–12). Además de servir de repaso de conocimientos ya adquiridos, las secciones de gramática y de vocabulario sirven de base para afianzar las actividades comunicativas correspondientes a los temas apuntados. Por otro lado, el esquema de cada capítulo es invariable: Notas culturales, Comprensión y comparación, Conexión Internet, Vocabulario básico, Práctica del vocabulario básico, Conversación creadora, Enlace gramatical, Escenas, Más actividades creadoras y Vocabulario útil.

El sistema de evaluación de las actividades comunicativas es consistente con las normas establecidas por ACTFL OPI y la con la metodología anunciada: 1) Comprensibilidad/Comunicación; 2) Fluidez/Vocabulario/Pronunciación; 3) Gramática; 4) Contenido; 5) Esfuerzo/Cumplimiento con la tarea. Quizás algunos instructores preferirían incluir la pronunciación en el epígrafe de la comprensibilidad/comunicación. Igualmente, los autores se refieren a la necesidad, y a la obligación, podría añadirse, de un pacto de calificación que debe llevarse a cabo desde el primer día de clases entre el estudiante y el instructor. El primero debe conocer cuáles son los criterios que medirán su rendimiento y progreso en la clase durante el semestre.

En este sentido, los autores se hacen eco del reproche siempre esgrimido por muchos estudiantes en cuanto a la aparente subjetividad de toda calificación de pruebas orales. Aunque no comentado por los autores, la solución a este probable conflicto está en manos del instructor mismo. Tanto los monólogos como los ejercicios de comprensión de diálogos grabados y de las conversaciones sostenidas entre parejas o en grupo pueden grabarse mediante el uso de las herramientas digitales disponibles en la inmensa mayoría de las aulas y laboratorios (por ejemplo, usando las plataformas de Blackboard, Blackboard Collaborate o Google Plus). De ese modo, hay una constancia registrada que sirve de punto de referencia para respaldar la nota alcanzada por los estudiantes. Asimismo, ambas partes—estudiante e instructor—estarán en condiciones de conservar un récord inobjetable del rendimiento demostrado a lo largo del curso.

Esta cuarta edición preserva la cualidad, presente en ediciones previas, de dividir las Notas Culturales en dos regiones, Hispanoamérica y España. Esto permite ubicar correctamente al estudiante en varios planos pedagógicos y objetivos de aprendizaje: en el del vocabulario y en el de la gramática, requeridos para el asunto principal de cada lección, y en el de las culturas y de las geografías. Sabido es que los estudiantes estadounidenses se caracterizan por su desconocimiento de estas dos materias. Es obvio, pues, que cualquier texto de aprendizaje tiene que tomar en cuenta estas carencias de forma que ellos adquieran no solamente habilidades comunicativas sino también instrucción en geografía física y económica, sin olvidar los contextos culturales de las áreas donde el español es la lengua nacional.

Sin embargo, los ejercicios de vocabulario y de gramática siguen una línea más tradicional: llenar espacios en blanco, emparejar columnas, indicar sinónimos y antónimos, señalar las relaciones existentes entre las palabras modelo. A este modo de ejercitación y de comprobación deberían añadirse otros que refuercen, a nivel de la comunicación oral, precisamente la habilidad esencial que *Conversaciones* trata de desarrollar. Por ejemplo, dictados (comprensión auditiva)

donde el estudiante esté obligado a identificar cada palabra o frase y deletrearla correctamente. A renglón seguido, hacer que los estudiantes improvisen y construyan oraciones utilizando dicho vocabulario a la par que las estructuras gramaticales. Así estarían mejor preparados para las fases subsiguientes, sobre todo las más orientadas a la práctica oral: Escenas y Más actividades creadoras.

Del resto, no caben dudas de que el uso de los mapas y de las tablas enfatizan otras habilidades como las de leer e interpretar. Vale decir lo mismo de los cortometrajes y de las grabaciones disponibles para los ejercicios de escuchar. El vocabulario útil, situado al final de las lecciones, debería ser parte del Vocabulario básico y por consiguiente habría que colocarlo, enseñarlo y practicarlo antes de las Escenas y de los dibujos (Más actividades creadoras), donde no obstante se indica que el primero ayudará a completar las actividades de esa sección.

Por todo lo señalado anteriormente, *Conversaciones creadoras* es un libro de texto altamente recomendable para cursos de conversación y, en verdad, hace honor a la creatividad que el título subraya, tan necesaria para instructores y estudiantes.

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Sam Houston State University

Carriscondo Esquivel, Francisco M., ed. *La lengua en el candelero: Repercusión mediática de asuntos lingüísticos*. Vigo: Academia del Hispanismo, 2014. Pp. 212. ISBN 978-8-41517-591-9.

Aunque desde hace más de dos décadas existe una vasta bibliografía sobre la incidencia de la lengua española en los medios de comunicación, incluidas las actas en dos tomos del Congreso celebrado en 1996 en la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, editado y prologado por Joaquín Garrido Medina, así como las memorias del Primer Congreso Internacional de la Lengua en Zacatecas, en 1997, compiladas por Luis Cortés Bargalló, y publicadas un año después en dos volúmenes bajo el título *La lengua española y los medios de comunicación* (Siglo XXI, 1998), lo cierto es que la inmensa mayoría de los artículos y libros publicados hasta la fecha se enfocan en recomendaciones gramaticales, captura de gazapos, interpretación de problemas modélicos, lingüística de la comunicación, estudios de fenómenos de la economía lingüística (como la retórica de la omisión y la condensación propias de la jerga periodística), o las narrativas de la divulgación científica—entre otros aspectos de ese “nuevo idioma, con un novedoso y singular poder de expresión” que advirtió McLuhan—. Sin embargo, esta vez recibimos un libro pionero en el ámbito académico que no se concentra en el uso del idioma en los medios, sino en el análisis lingüístico del idioma como noticia, llegando a establecer prácticas comparatistas entre la naturaleza de las diversas coberturas mediáticas.

Si bien *La lengua en el candelero* tiene algunos antecedentes parciales, en términos de tratamientos de contrastación comparatista—pienso en *Arabic and the Media: Linguistic Analyses and Applications*, editado por la sociolingüista Reem Bassiouney, una de las voces notables de la novísima narrativa egipcia y profesora de la Universidad de Georgetown, rico en análisis intermedáticos—, esto no le resta valor; por el contrario, demuestra el creciente interés sociolingüístico que ha ido despertando el tema que este libro inaugura para el ámbito hispánico. Por otro lado, es un libro novedoso en muchos sentidos, si consideramos que es apenas la punta visible del iceberg de un proyecto abarcador, minucioso y progresivo, que incluye iniciativas como Lengua y Prensa, una base de datos abierta—a la que todos los académicos e investigadores están invitados a colaborar—, que reúne más de 20 000 noticias extraídas de los diferentes medios de prensa, tanto impresos como digitales, en más de un lustro de existencia, y con registros tan tempranos como una nota fechada en 1899 sobre la adaptación de extranjerismos a la lengua española.

Este compendio es el primero, seguramente, de muchos que vendrán a partir del análisis de ese valioso corpus desarrollado con el apoyo de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Comunicación de la Universidad de Málaga. Y en su carácter precursor, puede darse el lujo de seleccionar ciertos tópicos y reservar otros para futuras ediciones, sin que esto tenga que ser considerado una

limitación. Habría que destacar que, aunque salta episodios, recoge los más interesantes para el lector general. En ese orden, abre con un dossier dedicado al impacto del evento que detonó en una de las polémica lingüística más álgidas y mediáticas de todos los tiempos: el lanzamiento de la *Ortografía de la lengua española* (Espasa: RAE 2010). Presumo que este es el suceso concreto que mayor avalancha de notas periodísticas y comentarios sobre el idioma habrá producido en la base Lengua y Prensa, ya que en su carácter normativo introducía cambios que afectarían a todos los hablantes, recibiendo una amplia cobertura en los medios iberoamericanos. Hay que tener en cuenta, sobre todo, la desigual acogida que tuvo entre académicos, lingüistas y líderes de opinión a ambos lados del Atlántico, a lo que se añade la singularidad de que algunos de los más verbales críticos de la nueva *Ortografía* son prominentes miembros de la RAE.

Ana Pano Alamán, de la Università di Bologna, y María R. Carrasco Escobar, de la Universidad de Málaga, aportan en este bloque sendos ensayos sobre la repercusión mediática de la noticia, resumiendo las principales posturas del debate, analizando sus argumentos y dividiendo a los actores en partidarios y detractores. Este particular resumen es utilísimo, un lustro después, para entender la dinámica del conflicto y los razonamientos lingüísticos de los actantes atrincherados en cada frente.

El volumen se completa con una sección de Misceláneas, que podría entenderse como una suerte de epílogo, pero que forma en realidad parte del plato fuerte, ya que comprende un abarcador estudio sobre la repercusión en los medios del informe “Sexismo lingüístico y visibilidad de la mujer”, presentado en 2012 por el académico Ignacio Bosque Muñoz, numerario de la RAE y catedrático de lengua española de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Este informe responde a otra importante crisis sistémica y teórica de nuestro tiempo, la proliferación de guías de lenguaje no sexista, que, considerando el idioma como una expresión concentrada de la ideología “y un instrumento para luchar contra la discriminación”, proponen un cambio de sus estructuras desde plataformas más políticas y populistas que especializadas, algunas de las cuales, como apunta Bosque, “conculcan aspectos gramaticales o léxicos firmemente asentados en nuestro sistema lingüístico” (110). El ensayo de Lucía Morillo Herrera contrasta y desmonta la cobertura de los dos periódicos más relevantes de la prensa española (*El País* y *ABC*) para determinar la objetividad periodística o la subordinación a agendas de intereses, tanto de los que apoyan las propuestas de las guías no sexistas, como de los que se inclinan a las normativas académicas y consuetudinarias.

Al tópico de la lengua y la nacionalidad en el contexto del plurilingüismo de las autonomías y regiones españolas están dedicados los dos ensayos restantes. En *Una historia contada por la prensa: La situación del euskera en el País Vasco (2001–05)*, Cristina Domínguez Rueda analiza la realidad de la euskaldunización vascuence y sus fundamentos legales y constitucionales, a partir de noticias extraídas de la base Lengua y Prensa; mientras que Leticia Ureña Rodríguez, en *España contra Andalucía, o la vigencia mediática de cierto tópicos lingüísticos*, se enfoca en el dilema del acento en las hablas andaluzas en el debate público y político así como en artículos de opinión. Ureña Rodríguez parte de los rasgos de la modalidad lingüística andaluza como expresión de una realidad nacional diferenciada, internamente segmentada en isoglosas que definen una compleja estructura sociorreticular (174), e investiga la tendencia de la caricaturización del habla vernácula en la prensa y la literatura, cuestionando el llamado complejo de inferioridad lingüística de los andaluces (180) y el tratamiento prejuicioso de las variantes de esta modalidad—sobre todo en su registro coloquial—en la prensa.

Como su coordinador y editor Francisco Carriscondo Esquivel anuncia en el prólogo, *La lengua en el candelero* deja ansiedad por leer investigaciones similares. Algunas, sabemos, ya vienen en camino; pero esperemos que este libro produzca el saludable contagio de estudios similares en esta región de la lengua al oeste del meridiano 45, donde el idioma también provoca escándalos ideológicos y compite por titulares.

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Enrique-Arias, Andrés, Manuel J. Gutiérrez, Alazne Landa, y Francisco Ocampo, eds. *Perspectives in the Study of Spanish Language Variation: Papers in Honor of Carmen Silva-Corvalán. Verba Anexo 72.* Santiago de Compostela: Servizo de Publicación e Intercambio Científico, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 2014. Pp. 580. ISBN 237-0-00020-104-1.

Para mí y muchos otros colegas, investigadores y estudiantes, la obra y la figura de Carmen Silva-Corvalán constituyen una parte esencial de nuestros estudios, cursos y reflexiones sobre la sociolingüística del español, la variación lingüística y la situación del español en los Estados Unidos. Este volumen representa un merecido y valioso homenaje a la profesora Silva-Corvalán realizado por algunos de sus numerosos discípulos, repartidos por universidades y centros de investigación en todo el mundo.

Tras una introducción en que se cumple el difícil objetivo de resumir las contribuciones de Carmen Silva-Corvalán al estudio de lenguas en contacto, variación lingüística, bilingüismo y cambio lingüístico, el volumen se estructura en cuatro áreas principales: 1) “Morphosyntactic Variation and Change” (con diez estudios); 2) “Spanish in the United States” (con cinco estudios); 3) “Language Acquisition” (con cuatro estudios); y 4) “Language in Society” (con dos estudios). De estos 21 trabajos, 12 se presentan en español y nueve en inglés, cada uno con un resumen y palabras clave en inglés, así como un listado bibliográfico individual.

El mayor número de capítulos en la primera parte del volumen refleja la trascendental influencia de la investigación de Silva-Corvalán en la apertura del análisis variacionista al nivel morfosintáctico. El primer estudio, de Asier Alcázar, se centra en la gramaticalización de la expresión *dizque* en el español latinoamericano y, en concreto, en la posibilidad de un continuo de opciones para la obligatoriedad de la expresión en la transmisión de información según el dialecto en que aparezca. Después, Alicia Ocampo mantiene el interés en temas de evidencialidad, en este caso respecto a las diversas formas del verbo *decir* en el español rioplatense. Los dos capítulos siguientes se enfocan en la variación sintáctica en español. Álvaro Cerrón-Palomino analiza tres posibles alternancias con pronombres de reanudación (“resumptive pronouns”) en cláusulas relativas del español limeño, y Bernard Comrie plantea las dificultades del estudio de la “a personal” en construcciones ditransitivas con un paciente humano. El próximo grupo de capítulos versa sobre la variación en el orden de distintos constituyentes sintácticos. Roberto Mayoral Hernández aplica una metodología variacionista para investigar el alcance de factores sintácticos, semánticos y contextuales en la posición del sujeto en español; Mercedes Sedano y Paola Bentivoglio extienden el análisis a la posición del sujeto y el objeto directo respecto al verbo a partir de un corpus procedente de once ciudades hispanohablantes; y Francisco Ocampo trabaja con el orden de palabras en cláusulas subordinadas relativas con un sujeto y un verbo transitivo, ahora con datos recogidos de español rioplatense en conversaciones informales. Con información derivada del corpus CREA, el capítulo de María José Rodríguez-Espíñeira examina características formales, semánticas y discursivas de las cláusulas flexionadas predicativas con verbos de percepción (p.ej., “lo vi que estaba jugando al ajedrez”). Los trabajos con que se cierra la primera parte del volumen abordan variedades de contacto en el español peninsular. Guillermo Rojo y Victoria Vázquez Rozas investigan la frecuencia, distribución y valores de las formas verbales con “-ra” en una muestra de español gallego oral extraída de otro importante corpus, el PRESEGAL-PRESEEA, mientras que Andrés Enrique-Arias ofrece una perspectiva histórica a los efectos del contacto entre castellano y catalán en Mallorca sobre el empleo del verbo *pedir* con usos semánticos y sintácticos propios de “preguntar” y de la distribución de los usos del futuro sintético *cantaré* frente al analítico *voy a cantar*.

La segunda parte, dedicada al español en Estados Unidos, comienza con un análisis de Manuel Gutiérrez acerca de la posición variable de pronombres clíticos verbales en determinadas frases obtenidas de contextos conversacionales auténticos del español de Houston. En un espacio geográfico diferente, Antonio Medina-Rivera observa el proceso de lateralización de /r/ implosiva en el español puertorriqueño en un interesante repertorio de textos orales y escritos, y con referencias a

posibles funciones lúdicas o como marcador de identidad. El capítulo de Claudia Parodi se ubica en Los Ángeles, pero su ámbito geográfico y social se amplía al analizar las consecuencias del contacto entre el español “de tierras altas” (característico del español vernáculo de Los Ángeles, con base mexicana) y el “de tierras bajas” (hablado por trabajadores de origen centroamericano). Por su parte, Ricardo Otheguy estudia, a partir de datos provenientes del español de Nueva York, la presencia o ausencia de los pronombres de sujeto en contextos de “perseveración”, es decir, la continua producción de un elemento lingüístico en distintas secuencias de la cadena discursiva. Finalmente, Domnita Dumitrescu lleva a cabo un atractivo análisis lingüístico sobre la mezcla de códigos en la obra literaria de Junot Díaz, con énfasis en el concepto de “translingüismo”, o sea, “the heteroglossic practices of postcolonial bi- and multilingual societies” (397).

Los cuatro capítulos de la tercera sección abarcan temas de interés para la adquisición del español en ámbitos informales y formales. Jürgen Meisel se adentra en una discusión sobre las dificultades en el proceso de adquisición de hablantes que crecen en espacios con dos lenguas, una propia del contexto familiar y la otra en la comunidad en general, situación muy habitual para la mayoría de los hablantes del español como lengua de herencia en Estados Unidos. Simona Montanari y sus colegas examinan las destrezas fonológicas en inglés de un grupo de niños bilingües inglés/español en edad preescolar en Los Ángeles, con resultados que sugieren una cercana interacción de ambos sistemas fonológicos durante su desarrollo. Ya con participantes de mayor edad, el estudio de Ana Sánchez-Muñoz explora la adquisición de las construcciones progresivas y la distinción pretérito-imperfecto en universitarios de nivel intermedio y avanzado, y propone que los resultados de la transferencia inglés/español pueden depender de las similitudes entre esas estructuras. Por último, John Stevens procura dar respuesta a la pregunta de si los programas informáticos de análisis del habla podrían ser útiles para el aprendizaje de los fonemas /p t k b d g/ en español, con resultados desiguales en función de cada fonema.

La sección final del volumen consta de dos trabajos; el primero, de Francisco Moreno Fernández, ahonda en un discurso muy actual, el de los movimientos sociales conocidos como “movimiento de los indignados”, “Spanish revolution” o “#15M”, a partir de una metodología basada en formas y significados lingüísticos en interacción con significados sociales y culturales; el segundo, de Liliana Paredes y D. Kyle Danielson, investiga grabaciones de inmigrantes mexicanos en Carolina del Norte cuya primera lengua es de origen amerindio, y para quienes el contacto inglés/español supone complicadas condiciones de acceso a servicios y, en general, de negociación de su identidad en distintos ámbitos públicos.

Cabe subrayar que esta muy sucinta descripción de los 21 estudios incluidos en el volumen de Enrique-Arias y sus colegas no hace suficiente justicia a su calidad, ni tampoco a la sólida trayectoria investigadora de sus autores. No obstante, la selección y diversidad de temas y contextos de estudio, las múltiples posibilidades metodológicas y los muy sugerentes análisis de resultados que los editores han incorporado en este volumen constituyen sin lugar a dudas un brillante homenaje a la magnitud de la obra investigadora y docente de Carmen Silva-Corvalán, y además una excelente referencia para todos aquellos colegas y alumnos que, como el que suscribe esta reseña, se han interesado por el estudio de las lenguas en diversos ámbitos sociales y humanos gracias a la profesora Silva-Corvalán.

Manel Lacorte

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González, Anne. *Colorín Colorado: Introducción a la literatura juvenil hispana*. Wilkes Barre: Panda, 2014. Pp. 374. ISBN 978-0-98183-923-3.

Colorín Colorado: Introducción a la literatura juvenil hispana is a good alternative textbook choice for an intermediate to advanced Spanish language course. It consists of four thematic units (“Identity,” “Love,” “Society,” and “Loss”). Each of these units are expanded upon through supplementary materials and literary glossaries.

The book is an original selection of literary texts, short stories or excerpts from various works. Anne González has done an excellent job of incorporating authors from almost every country in the Hispanic world. Some of these writers are renowned, as is the case with Modernists Rubén Darío and José Martí; some other authors are not commonly included in textbooks or literary anthologies, like Costa Rican authors Carmen Lyra and Joaquín Gutiérrez.

Colorín Colorado could have a variety of uses in the classroom. The potential users of this book range from students at an advanced level of high school instruction to an intermediate or advanced level of college instruction. *Colorín Colorado* would fit perfectly in a conversation class, and/or an intermediate and advanced composition class, where writing skills are developed. The textbook incorporates clearly the four fundamental skills for foreign language learning: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The book includes colorful illustrations, creative games, practice exercises, and discussion questions for every story, which promotes listening, reading and speaking. For writing, section 4 of each unit, "Sugerencias para profesores," includes a theme to develop an essay.

The textbook includes literary works that are intended for general audiences and not exclusively for young readers, nevertheless. The short story of Peruvian poet César Vallejo, *Paco Yunque* is an example, or Mario Benedetti's "El hombre que aprendió a ladrar." However, these stories only enhance the volume.

Regarding the methodology, even though the author does not clarify it, the activities are designed for the instructor to build an eclectic approach. The predominance of activities that would benefit the student when following some approaches and techniques over others is noticeable. From a lexical approach to task-based activities or even grammar and translation, the instructor is given a ground to design his/her class with a set of helpful activities. If deciding on one method, the Cooperative Language Learning Approach stands out as part of the philosophical methodology of the book. This approach poses that learning is built within the social exchange and promotes communicative interaction in the classroom along with peer tutoring, as well as development of learning and communication strategies.

The inclusion of Francisco Morales Santos's "El Popol Vuh" for children and the Taíno legend by Juan Bosch "La Ciguapa" is remarkable. It is paramount that education in the field of Spanish offers a diverse and enriched variety of literary texts within the field of Hispanic literature. Especially nowadays in a globalized world, it has been given more importance to open the students' cultural horizons. As stated by the author, "one of the explicit goals of this text is to question many of the commonly held conceptions and stereotypes about children, childhood, and children's literature" (xiii). It is indeed crucial to read texts about the indigenous and pre-Hispanic cultures and traditions; these works are fundamental to understand the literatures and cultures of Latin America as a whole.

The subtitle of the book as "Introducción a la literatura juvenil hispana," though, could be misleading. One may think that it is a book for an advanced undergraduate level course on *jóvenes adultos* or adolescent literature in Spanish. This is not a textbook for a specialized course on this genre and certainly not an introduction for this field. The supplementary material lacks the excerpt or work mentioned on this chapter, due to copyright issues. This gap creates somewhat of a void and discontinuity in the textbook structure.

Summarizing, this is an innovative textbook that uses mostly stories dedicated to young readers written in Spanish. The field of children's literature and/or *jóvenes adultos* in Spanish is practically an emergent field, unlike its English counterpart. *Colorín Colorado* is a remarkable contribution to the very scarce choices of this genre in Spanish, and a great contribution to the variety of textbooks for intermediate to advanced Spanish instruction currently on the market.

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Fiction and Film

Alonso de Santos, José Luis. *Going Down to Morocco*. Trans. and Intro. Duncan Wheeler. Oxford: Oxbow, 2013. Pp. 231. ISBN 978-1-90834-327-7.

This bilingual edition of *Bajarse al moro/Going Down to Morocco* forms part of the Aris and Phillips Hispanic Classic series that includes English renditions of works by Lorca, Sender, Unamuno and Valle-Inclán. The format of the translation—Spanish on the left page, English on the right—is conducive to Duncan Wheeler's intention of providing a critical edition as a tool for language acquisition. Wheeler provides an introduction, a bibliography and an interview with Alonso de Santos. He prefaces the introduction with quotes from Joaquín Sabina, Enrique Tierno Galván and Luis Villena, thus setting the tone for a helpful synthesis of *La Movida*. This overview is followed by an appraisal of the playwright's contribution to the Spanish theater of the 1980s as well as a discussion of language and dramatic structure of, and reaction—both critical and commercial—to *Bajarse al moro* and its contemporary relevance.

Wheeler notes that Alonso de Santos's theater, especially *Bajarse al moro*, hybridizes urban cinematic traditions (Hollywood comedies and the Nueva Comedia Madrileña of the 1980s). In addition, his realistic use of dialogue distances his work from the theatrical tradition that placed emphasis on the rhetorical use of poetic language. Alonso de Santos instead creates characters that bring to mind the picaresque tradition. Of special interest is Wheeler's interview (in both Spanish and English) with the playwright, who reflects on several aspects of his theater: the presence of high and low culture, the *sainete* tradition, and dramatic structure. His anecdote concerning the reticence of actresses to accept roles in his first work, *La estanquera de Villecas*, provides a glimpse of the uneasiness and uncertainty many artists and performers experienced during the transition from dictatorship to democracy.

While Wheeler acknowledges his translation is approximate, several renditions are grammatically incorrect. For example, Chusa, exasperated by policéman Alberto's prolonged berating of Jaimito for taking his pistol, interjects sarcastically, "Y dale" (164) which is mistakenly translated as "and hand it [the pistol] over to him" (165). Doña Antonia's reference to her husband, "Pues nada, se llevó un disgusto" (172) reads as "Well, anyway, they're very distressed" (173). At times, parts of the Spanish text do not appear in translation. Two cases of omissions are Jaimito's remarks to Chusa: "Así no me da la gana" (150) and "Tú no tienes nada que ver en esto, ni yo tampoco" (150). In addition, Chusa's comment, "No sé cómo no te das cuenta" (150), is attributed to Jaimito (151) in Wheeler's version.

Wheeler's translation—intended for British readers as evidenced by expressions such as "Make some dosh," "He's taking the piss" and "You join the queue and Bob's your uncle," among others—is for the most part accurate, although he runs into difficulty with register and tone, particularly the more challenging passages dealing with slang. He tends to provide literal yet inexact translations of numerous colloquialisms. For example, Alberto's observation, "No sea que ése quite el tapón y le dé algo" (132) translated as "Just in case that one takes the cork out and it gives him I don't know" (133), particularly the final clause, does not convey the intense surprise implicit in the expression "darle algo." The frequent mistranslation of colloquialisms results in skewed readings of several passages. For example, Doña Antonia's intense displeasure with Spanish television expressed with "Me da algo" (178) is rendered as "it does something to me" (178), which does not accurately convey her dismay with and distaste for media programming. Yet another example of literal translation arises when she presumptuously advises Elena to marry Alberto and have children "como Dios manda" (174). Wheeler's interpretation of this commonly employed expression as "that's what God says you should do" (175) does not capture more nuanced and sententious registers such as "as God commands" or "as it is meant to be."

Alberto's humorous admonition to Elena to refrain from touching his firearm because "Da calambre" (126) is translated as "It gives you cramp" (127), even though the context clearly

suggests an electric shock instead of muscle cramps. When Jaimito is wounded and requires immediate medical attention in the emergency room Chusa suggests he be taken to the “Casa de Socorro” (164) rendered by Wheeler as “charity ward” (165). Alonso de Santos’s characterization of Doña Antonia as “dicharachera” (90) appears as “foul-mouthed” (91), yet this talkative woman’s discourse is free of curses, and generally speaking, rather civil. Because such imprecise renditions of colloquialisms encumber Wheeler’s reading of the play, some of its original flavor is lost. For readers unfamiliar with Spanish, such errors will most likely go unnoticed, yet this is problematic since Wheeler envisions his version of *Bajarse al moro* as a tool for language acquisition. In short, for this reviewer, the grammatical errors in translation, textual omissions and imprecision in register detract from an entirely convincing reading of Alonso de Santos’s play.

John Margenot III

Providence College

Ambroggio, Luis Alberto. *En el jardín de los vientos: Obra poética (1974–2014)*. Ed. Carlos E. Paldao y Rosa Tezanos-Pinto. Nueva York: ANLE, 2014. Pp. 907. ISBN 978-0-9903455-1-0.

No es tarea fácil la de comentar en un limitado espacio cuarenta años de sorprendente labor poética. *En el jardín de los vientos: Obra poética (1974–2014)* es un recorrido lírico en el tiempo, que abarca diecisiete poemarios reunidos en una antología que se despliega desde 1974 hasta el año 2014. Considerado como uno de los poetas más importantes de habla hispana en los Estados Unidos, Luis Alberto Ambroggio nos brinda cuatro décadas de cantos de vida y muerte, de guerra y celebraciones, de brindis y desnudos, de sombras y luces, de destierros y trasiegos, de poemas como vientos, de versos carnales y jardines divinos. Se trata de un viaje hacia el fenómeno y el noumeno, sondeando el abismo, trazando puentes, deseando entrar en el ámbito de lo infinito, asentándose en el finito y explorándolo en todas direcciones.

Editada por Carlos E. Paldao y Rosa Tezanos-Pinto y publicada por la Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española (ANLE), el atractivo que desprende *En el jardín de los vientos* se acentúa con las evocadoras y sugestivas imágenes fotográficas de Gerardo Piña-Rosales, que invitan, desde el umbral de cada poemario, a sumergirse en la palabra poética ambroggiana. En esta antología el poeta se afana en múltiples tareas, desde el intento de discernir el sentido que tiene el oficio de la escritura y el don de la palabra, hasta la puesta en marcha de ese oficio en su implacable búsqueda del sentido de la vida y de la muerte, el tiempo y su elasticidad.

Abre la antología *Poemas de amor y vida* (1987), dedicado a la existencia de los que “son mi poesía” (17). Tras revelar en el “Prefacio” al “Libro de hojas blancas” que le quiere dar vida con sus palabras (19), le canta el poeta a la “Maternidad” (20) y a “El hijo” (21), comenzando así a explorar las vicisitudes de la vida, del amor, así como la inevitabilidad de la muerte y la trascendencia de la palabra poética. Para Luis Alberto Ambroggio todo es digno de exploración y duda, porque “[d]udar es caminar en el mundo de las ideas [...] es preguntarse siempre el por qué de lo que sea/ dejando abierto el interrogante cada vez” (“La duda” 32). Y en ese interrogante abierto se revela la intuición poética que se empeña en “enfocar las cosas”, aunque no obtenga en su perseverancia “el foco que las capture a todas con plena nitidez” (32). El misterio del tiempo se presenta desafiante, y la búsqueda del sentido de la vida junto a la revelación de la insuficiencia de la palabra permanece hasta el último poemario que cierra la antología, *Todos somos Whitman* (2014).

En *Poemas desterrados* (1995), sobresalen las voces de otros poetas y pensadores y se develan asimismo las emociones del autor en su condición de exiliado, y es que “[s]er poeta es estar lejos, / hasta lejos de la nada” (“Exilio” 241); y en “Epílogo para el futuro”, el poeta versa “[p]eregrinación del / fue, es y será / en el exilio que llevo adentro” (243). No obstante, para Ambroggio el exilio mismo no es tan solo una cuestión de ciudadanía o de territorio, sino una de lingüística. “‘Welcome’ me dijeron allí y me pierdo” (“Sueño del inmigrante USA” 237). La lengua nativa se alza con su centralidad identitaria desde el primer libro de poemas que abre esta antología. En “Comunión”, el poeta declara que “para entenderme / tienes que saber español. . . Si hablo otro

lenguaje / y uso palabras distintas / para expresar los mismos sentimientos / no sé si de hecho / seguiré siendo/ la misma persona" (41).

En *Los habitantes del poeta* (1997) se descubren de nuevo el arte poética y la palabra como tabla de salvamento, la poesía como metáfora de la salvación. El poeta habita en silencio su poema y, recíprocamente, la palabra poética habita en él: "nunca está solo el poeta, / lo poseen voces / inasibles y punzantes, / . . . la palabra, / esa divinidad salvaje" ("Los habitantes del poeta" 320). Pero revela también su insuficiencia: "Yo sé lo que duele la tortura de la palabra, / usarla, y vivir en su débil boceto la propia insuficiencia" ("Diálogo" 339). El don de la palabra es otro tema esencial en *El testigo se desnuda* (2002), y así se manifiesta de nuevo en *Laberintos de humo* (2005), junto a sus acostumbrados temas del amor, la soledad, la muerte o la fugacidad del tiempo. Se subraya asimismo la presencia hispana en los Estados Unidos: "Si cada ladrillo hablara; / Si cada puente hablara; / Si hablaran los parques, las plantas, las flores; / Si cada trozo de pavimento hablara, / Hablarían en español" ("Paisajes de Estados Unidos" 530).

La arqueología del viento (2011) se inicia invitándonos a re-imaginar la realidad para así perpetuarnos en la palabra y por la palabra, y el alcance filosófico de su obra se consolida y madura en su voluntad de hacer filosofía desde las afueras de la misma filosofía—recordando a Deleuze—, y lleva a cabo una filosofía de la memoria poética con *Homenaje al camino* (2012), *Luz mendiga* (2013), y *Todos somos Whitman* (2013), último poemario de esta colección. Cierra esta edición un *post scriptum* en donde se pone de relieve la pluralidad que implica toda escritura. Y de ello es muestra *En el jardín de los vientos*, una cuidada antología que culmina con éxito su propósito de ser una visión integral de la fecunda poética ambroggiana.

Ambroggio pule sus versos con admirable lirismo, una poesía seducida por el asombro de lo inefable, seductora por su ternura, elegancia y vigor. Esta antología es indispensable para todo lector que se precie en conocer lo mejor de la literatura hispana escrita en los Estados Unidos. Se trata de una valiosísima aportación a los estudios sobre la palabra poética en general, y a los estudios sobre la teoría, filosofía y práctica de la poética en la obra de Luis Alberto Ambroggio

Nuria Morgado

College of Staten Island

Valle-Inclán, Ramón del. *The Memoirs of the Marquis of Bradomín: Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter Sonatas*. Trans. Robert M. Fedorchek. Intro. John C. Wilcox. Newark: de la Cuesta, 2014. Pp. 265. ISBN 978-1-58871-163-2.

Robert M. Fedorchek's timely translation and scholarly edition of Valle-Inclán's *Sonatas* will appeal to readers and literary scholars who possess a foundation and interest in early twentieth century European literature. This English translation of the *Sonatas* is accompanied by a rigorous introduction to the life and work of Valle-Inclán, written by John C. Wilcox, that includes a selected bibliography of critical sources in English and Spanish. Furthermore, the introduction provides a formal and thematic analysis of the *Sonatas* that will be useful to readers unacquainted with the sardonic irreverence and unorthodox style for which Valle-Inclán is so well known. Finally, the introduction contains a knowledgeable discussion of the historical period to which the *Sonatas* belong, an instructive overview of their intertextual referents (both classical and contemporary), an informed commentary on their early reception, and a well-supported critical assessment of their place within the canon of Spanish Modernism.

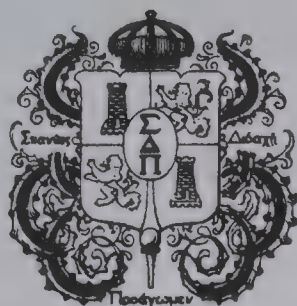
The experience of reading the *Sonatas* in translation produces a pleasure all its own, despite losing some of the aesthetic impact that comes with reading them in the original. The four novelettes in English translation remain true to their original storyline in every detail. Diction is utilized strategically to remind the reader of the Spanish setting and cultural context. The author retains, for example, proper names and uses words that phonetically imitate, or match, the Spanish. One such example is the use of 'brio' (instead of 'spirit') for *brío*. Another is the use of 'famiars' (instead of 'relatives') for *familiares*. The syntax correlates to that of the original

text in structure and complexity, and this in turn lends authenticity to the translation without compromising readability or obstructing the flow of the narration.

Translation in the modern sense constitutes a practice of decoding and recoding. Fedorchek might mistakenly be seen to reject this fundamental paradigm in that he systematically tends toward the use of parallel structures in syntax and direct equivalencies in diction. Two further examples of his use of direct equivalencies in diction conveniently illustrate this point: instead of using the less precise 'coach' or 'buggy' for *silla de posta* at the beginning of *Spring Sonata*, Fedorchek uses the indisputably appropriate 'post chaise.' Similarly, 'chopines' (a style of clogs introduced to Europe via Turkey in the eighteenth century) replaces the Spanish *chapines* in *Summer Sonata*. Given that there appears to be very little attempt to deviate from the original for the sake of clarity and readability, the result is that the translation has an antique—even sometimes antiquated—feel to it that appears to conform to theories of direct translation popular during the Victorian era. Yet Valle-Inclán's choice of diction itself lends an antiquish and even fantastical feel to the *Sonatas*. *Silla de posta* represents an anachronism in the context of early-twentieth-century cosmopolitan Spain, whereas *chapines* (common in colonial Guatemala and the Basque region of Spain) would be an even more uncommon style of footwear in post-independence Mexico (the setting of *Summer Sonata*) than in much of early twentieth-century rural Spain, where *zuecos* or *chanclos* would be the terms more commonly used. In effect, Valle-Inclán's choice of diction helps attribute to the *marqués de Bradomín* an obsolete and idiosyncratic worldview. Hence the methodology employed by Fedorchek appears to serve the purpose of preserving the spirit of the text and replicating its linguistic effect. Ironically though, what might be inadvertently acquired through this sort of strategic purism of translation is the feel of imprecision within the language in which the text has been recoded. Some of the unconventional diction (i.e., 'familiar' instead of 'relative') amounts to a distracting oddity, whereas a few of the archaisms (i.e., 'post chaise' and 'chopines') register as unnecessarily pedantic. As in the original text, however, the translator's likely artistic aim is that of defamiliarization. Unfortunately, only the most expert readers of early modernist texts will likely be able to discern such an intention on the part of the translator.

Literary works that exhibit the linguistic sophistication and thematic complexity of the *Sonatas* require a translator with learned expertise in the literary and historical periods to which the text and author belong and a trained understanding of the text. As emeritus professor of Spanish with numerous translations to his credit, Fedorchek meets these fundamental preconditions. His knowledge and close familiarity with the work of Valle-Inclán unmistakably make a difference in bringing the *Sonatas* alive in translation. Fedorchek's translation exhibits its own distinctive register of poetic resonance and idiosyncratic expression that in essence imitates as much as transcribes the original text. The translation reads with fluidity and ease, remains remarkably faithful to the source, and in effect channels the spirit of Valle-Inclán's early masterpiece. Therefore Fedorchek fulfills with distinction the task of decoding and recoding, in accordance with the norms and practice of modern translation. This new English edition of the *Sonatas*, translated with competence, care, and sensibility, constitutes a sound achievement within the field of literary translation. It will undoubtedly help to bring much overdue recognition to one of Spain's most exceptional and inimitable writers of the twentieth century.

Brian Cope
The College of Wooster



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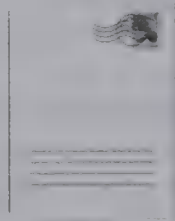
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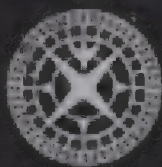
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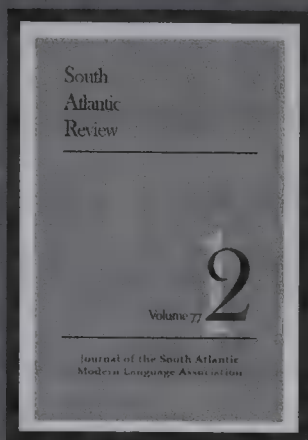
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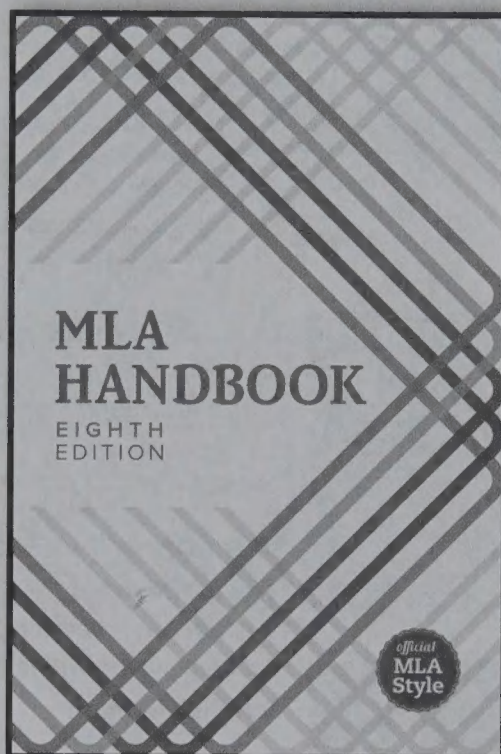
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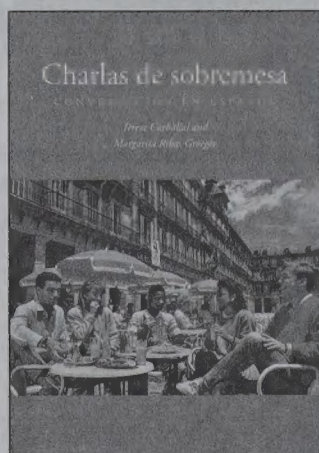
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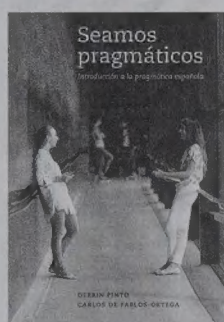
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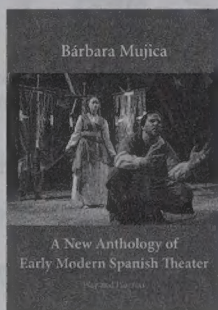
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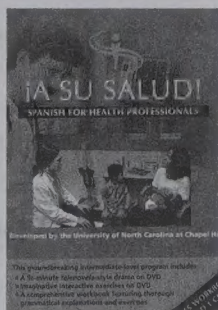
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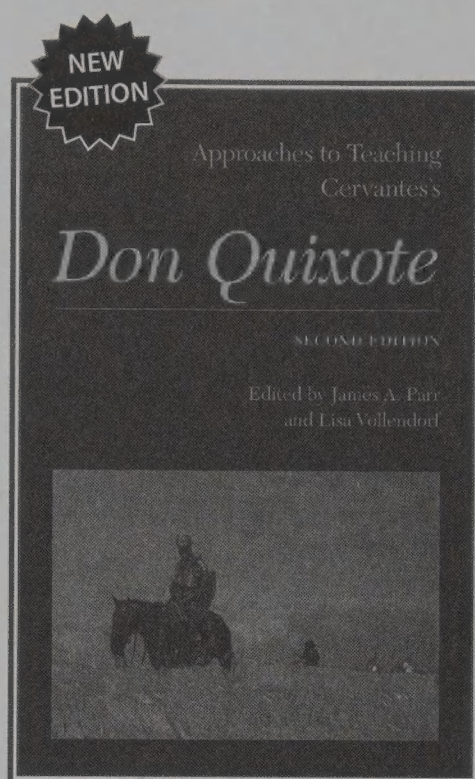
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